hram



Portrait of the week George Bahgory.....p.8

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Southern friendship

CHINESE President Jiang Zemin said yesterday that closer ties between Egypt and China would help promote greater cooperation among the nations of the South and set an example for developing countries in the 21st century, reports Nevine Khalil. Jiang spoke at a news conference wind ing up his official visit to Egypt that began last Mon-

day.
"Cementing EgyptianChinese friendship would not only serve the interes of the two peoples but would also promote coopcration between countries of the South and set an example for developing countries to emulate," Jiang said. Jiang also spoke of "difficulties and problems" in China's relations with the United States, which he characterised as "seesawing" despite some re-cent improvements. (see p.2)

Monitors meet

TALKS between representatives of five nations on arrangements to monitor the US-brokered 26 April ceasefire in South Lebanon resumed yesterday in Washington, after failing on Tuesday to reach a broad

agreement on major issues.

Ambassadors from Syria Lehanon, Israel, France and the US chose the Lebanese city of Naqoura as the headquarters of the monitoring group, after five hours of talks on Tuesday. But the representatives differed oo the group's functions and the procedures to investigate ceasefire viola-

Chopper deal

EGYPT has concluded a \$100 million deal with the United States for the supply of 10 SH-2G submarinehunting helicopters. They are expected to arrive in Egypt in October, reports Galai Nassar. The deal is part of annual US military aid to Egypt totalling 1.3 billion dollars since Egypt Israel in 1979.

Under the provisions of the new deal, the US Kaman company will re-equip 10 SH-2F helicopters now being used by the US Navy and convert them into the SH-2G model. The new helicopters will operate in conjunctico with Egyptian destroyers and frigates, including the Americanbuilt Knox-type frigates Rashid (Rosetta) and Domiat (Damietta). The latter is participating for the first time in the Cleopatra '96 war games, grouping Egypt, France and Italy. (see p.3)

Pharos ruins

THE NEW season of the French-Egyptian ar-chacological excavation of the submerged rains of Pha-ros Island off Qair Bey Fort in Alexandria began on an auspicious note, reports Hala Halim. The chronic problem posed by the pres-ence of a breakwater on top of the antiquities has been resolved with the announcement by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) this week that the 180 concrete blocks are to be removed.

"The concrete blocks are not going to be completely raised from the site, but de-posited elsewhere underwater," said Abdel-Halim general of the SCA.

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David Blake:

Published in Cairo by AL-AHRAM established in 1875



photo:Hossam Diab

IN a showcase competition, 56 squash players representing 13 countries will test their mettle against each other in the first Al-Ahram International Squash Championship, reports Inas Mazhar.

Under Khufu's eyes

The qualifying and first rounds are currently being played in the Cairo Stadium indoor complex. Beginning Saturday, the second round main draw matches, however, will be played on a state-of-the-art glass court oo the Pyramids Plateau.

Under the hlazing Giza sun. flanked by the shadows of the three great pyramids of Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure, and surrounded by the walls of the glass court, they will compete for the \$100,000 pot.

The 100,000 pounds sterling court was brought in from London last Saturday and is being erected by British engineers using equipment provided by Al-Ahram Organisation. Army staff, combining their logistic skills and manpower, will build the

spectator stands surrounding the

Arafat shuffling with a new deck

Talks with an Islamist party may be the reason why Arafat has yet to assign the portfolios of his first cabinet, writes Tarek Hassan from Gaza

The formation of the first Palestinian cabinet after last January's elections was a tortuous job indeed. After weeks of delay, Yassir Arafat finally managed to announce the names of some 25 ministers last Thursday. He has not yet reached a decision over the assignment of portfolios, however; nor has he filled all the cabinet seats. Informed sources say that negotiations with some opposition factions are expected to lead to the inclusion of another three names in the new cabinet.

There are rumours about attempts to secure the participation in the cabinet of one member from one of the two main Damascus-based opposition groups, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It is now also certain that top-level negotiations with the Islamic National Salvation Party, formed last March and made up mostly of former Hamas members, are under way, and that Arafat personally met members of that party last Monday after his return from Cairo.

The secretary-general of the Palestinian Presidency, Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, told Al-Ahram Weekly that the meeting took place at the request of the leaders of the party, who sought to discuss with Arafat their wish to participate in the new cabinet. Fikri Abdel-Latif, the party spokes-person, confirmed yesterday that negotiations were under way saying: "We have asked for the education or social af-fairs portfolio."

The cabinet formation announced last week included only members of groups and organisations officially be-longing to the PLO. It was the smaller PLO organisations, however - with the exception of Fatah, of course - rathor than the major ones, which scooped the ministerial posts. This is due to the fact that it was small organisations such as the Popular Struggle Front, Fada, and Al-Shaab Party (the former communist party) which supported Ar-afat in his negotiations with Israel. The former communist party is now for the first time represented in the cabinet by

Portfolios assignment postponed

AS HE walked to the city hall of the West Bank town of Bethlehem yesterday, Arafat was met by a large group of Palestinians protesting the arrests of oumerous Islamic activists by the Palestinian authority, reported AFP. Arafat is in Bethlehem to attend a two-day Palestinian Council session which was supposed to witness the announcement of the assignment of portfolios to the 26 Palestinian cabinet

members, whose names were an-

Ahmed Korei, said Arafat planned to announce the distribution of portfolios at next week's legislative sessioo in Gaza City. Also yesterday the Israeli author-

ities prevented Intisar Al-Wazir, a a Hamas activist in her car from Gaza member of the new Palestinian cabinet and widow of assassinated Palestinian leader Abu Jihad, from travelling from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank to attend a meeting of the self- bers of the legislative council.

have to rule.

nounced last week. Council speaker, rule council in Bethlehem,

drawn from Arafat's organisation, Fatah.

The only council members inside the new cabinet who

are neither members of Fatah nor close to it are Abdel-

Jawad Saleh and Emad El-Falougi, the former Hamas

member who broke ranks with his organisation to support

Arafat. Bearing in mind El-Falougi's special relationship

with Arafat, it is most unlikely that he will play a prom-

inent oppositional role within the cabinet. Thus so far Sa-

lch, along with Barghouti, and possibly the two or three

ministers to be nominated this week, are those expected to

express dissent, albeit not very loudly, in discussions of the many crucial issues upon which the new cabinet will

When the new cabinet met in Gaza last Saturday, it

formed a committee to draft a political, economic and so-

cial programme. It is the programme, more than the for-

mation of the cabinet, that matters for Arafat, last week he

made it clear that be wants the council's vote of con-

fidence on his new cabinet to be based on that pro-

gramme. He needs the vote if he is to proceed in his nego-

tiations with the Israelis from a position of strength.

Nabil Shaath, a close aide to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, said Israeli authorities claimed that her travel pass was revoked last month after she was accused of transporting to the West Bank. Israelis refused an offer by Shaath to take her in his car, saying she should have boarded an earlier bus carrying other Gaza mem-

number of PLO old guards to a symbolic figure has been one of Arafat's main tactics since his peace deal with Is-Thus Arafat's recent demand that Israel allow the Palestinian Authority to run the PLO's diplomatic missions abroad came as no surprise to anybody. It is a long-overdue snub to the PLO's political department and its Tu-nis-based president Farouq Quddoumi, the Palestinian For-

eign Minister, who refused to join Arafat in Gaza because of his opposition to the Oslo Accords. In his bid to have full control over the new cabinet, Ar-afat has also played his usual card: a balanced mix of members belonging to influential Palestinian families in various important regions. Among the most prominent sons of ootables in the new cabinet are a member of the wealthy Al-Masri family from Nablus, a member of the in-

One significant feature of the new cabinet is the buge

discrepancy between the percentage of those members belonging to the PLO's Executive Committee, traditionally the highest Palestinian decision-making body, and that of

members of the Palestinian Council residing in the self-

rule areas, in the favour of the latter group. Reducing the

fluential Hebron Al-Qawasmeh family, and Freih Abu Meddin from Gaza. The one important region which seems underrepresented in the new cabinet, given its importance in the final status negotiations, is Jerusalem, with only two names, Hassan Tahboub, a religious figure, and Bashir Barghouti, a communist who is not from Jerusalem prop-

er, but from neighbouring Ramallah. Many Palestinian commentators believe that Arafat's new cabinet lacks the strength that will be required to successfully navigate the difficult phase ahead. They suspect that in selecting his cabinet Arafat has once again reserved for himself the dominant role in the Palestinian arena, re-

gardless of whether that involves voicing assent or dissent,

on the domestic front and at the negotiating table.

its first man, Bashir Barghouti, rather than his deputy, Soliman Najab, who represents the party on the PLO Executive Committee.

Another newcomer to the Palestinian official scene is Abdel-Jawad Saleh, the former mayor of Beirah, who was expelled by the Israelis in the 1970s and who served on the PLO Executive Committee during the 1980s as an independent member. Ever since his return to Ramallah last year, Saleh has been considered a key figure in the opposition to Arafat, and he reaped the highest votes in the Ra-mallah constituency during last January's elections for his opposition to Oslo. Now many observers doubt whether Salch will be as vociferous as many supporters expected

in his opposition inside the Legislative Council. In fact, almost 80 per cent of the new cabinet was formed of members of the newly elected legislative council, and many observers believe that Arafat has sought to undermine opposition within the council through this move. One cannot really consider the members of the council to be one unified bloc within the cabinet, bow-

ever, since most of the council members in the cabinet are

Press law bargaining

Dissent continues in the committee drafting a new press law, but the Press Syndicate's chairman remains optimistic a fair compromise will be reached, reports Shaden Shehab

A widespread perception amongst journal-ists that a Shura Council committee drafting a new press law will not agree to many of their demands has re-ignited the confrontation between the government and the press. However, Ibrahim Nafie, chairman of the Press Syndicate, remains convinced that a mutually agreeable solution can be reached

in the end.

The committee has witnessed several stormy sessions, with splits on many issues regarding the new law. Reports that several members on the committee are insisting on the provision of barsh penalties for publishing offences and restrictions on press freedom, have disappointed and angered journalists, who had believed that the committee was set up to draft a more liberal law

than Law 93, passed nearly a year ago.

However, Nafie, who as syndicate chairman is a member of the committee, told Al-Ahram Weekly he was "optimistic that a compromise will be reached in the end, one that will strike a fair balance between media rights and obligations." In Natic's view, "it is only natural to find diverse points of view in any discussion between the syndicate and the decision makers." He predicted, however, that "80 per cent of the journalists' demands will be agreed on by the committee." The journalists had proposed amendments which went beyond cancellation of Law 93 to which they objected.

The journalists' main goal, Nafic added, "was to cancel all the provisions of Law 93, and this is exactly what we will achieve. We cannot have it all; what is important is that we do not give up our basic rights and demands." The crisis between the government and

journalists crupted at the end of last May, when the government rushed amendments to the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedures Law, known as Law 93 of 1995, through the People's Assembly, Emaged journalists held six extraordinary general assemblies in the Press Syndicate in quick succession, pledging to get the law repealed, and threatened to

stage a general strike on 24 June. However, President Hosni Mubarak inter-

vened, and met with the Press Syndicate's council. A semi-governmental committee, including journalists and legal experts, was set up to draft a new press law, and worked on it from mid-July last year until last March. During a 10 March extraordinary general assembly, journalists demanded some amendments to the draft as a precondition to the syndicate's approval. The draft press law and the amendments were submitted to President Mubarak who in turn passed them on to the

The committee is expected to complete its discussions on 25 May. The full Shura Council will then discuss the draft, before it is returned in President Mubarak, who in turn will submit it to the People's Assembly for final enactment.

Shura Council committee.

The confrontation took a sharp turn when Ibrahim Nafie, chairman of the Press Syndicate and a member of the Shura Council committee, walked out of a committee meeting when the group refused to amend an article stating that a member of the Supreme Press Council must attend meetings of the Press Syndicate's disciplinary board. Nafie is insisting that the board should be limited to syndicate members. He also opposes articles imposing prison sentences on those found guilty of libel, an offence he believes should be punishable by fines only.

As a result, the Press Syndicate council held a meeting and issued a statement saying the council insisted that a new press law must "include all the amendments that the syndicate and general assembly agreed upon". The council, the statement said, would "abide by Mubarak's initiative, which calls for a civilised and comprehensive press

law to take us into the 21st century". It continued: "The council is surprised that the suggestions of some members of the Shura Council committee reflect a desire to restrict press freedom, limit the legitimate rights of journalists, and place some sort of control on the Press Syndicate."

The syndicate's council agreed to call an extrordinary general assembly on 21 May. "If the outcome of the Shura Council com-

mittee is not in the journalists favour, the council is planning to suggest a sit-in on 27
May as a protest," said council member
Magdi Mehanna. "We will also suggest celebrating 10 June (the date of the first extraordinary general assembly) as 'Journal-ists' Day'. This is all we can do. We can only express our refusal."

On the same day Nafie walked out, Mustafa Kamel Murad, leader of the opposition Liberal Party withdrew from the committee altogether. Murad told the Weekly that the "committee's main target is to entrap jour-nalists in any way possible." Most of the committee members, he added, were obsessed with placing more restrictions on the freedom of the press and finding ways to put journalists in jail. "I will not allow myself to take part in this," he vowed.

Salaheddin Hafez, managing editor of Al-Ahram told the Weekly he agreed that the committee was "dominated by extremist members who are striving to place restrictions on the freedom of the press". Their numbers, he added, greatly exceed those whose liberal thinking is in accordance with the country's democratic process." He cited the insistence of many members that li-bel offences should be punishable by imprisonment, pointing out that such a policy is at variance with that of developed countries, where only fines are imposed in such cases. The committee, Hafez added, "is totally ignoring the amendments demanded by the

Hafez sees the journalists' next general as-sembly as a watershed, because "it will determine how things will develop in the oext

There was, however, some relief among journalists when the committee agreed on five articles of the draft press law that were included in their demands. The most important of these states that no writer should be taken into custody in connection with a publication offence except in one case - violating Article 179 of the Penal Code, which deals with insulting or defaming the pres-

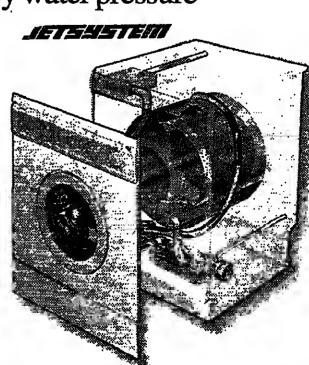


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A bridge to Beijing

After forty years of diplomatic relations, Egypt and China turn to each other for support both on the regional and international levels, writes **Nevine Khali!**

Egypt and China are looking towards each other for stronger economic and political ties, and President Jiang Zemin's visit to Egypt this week promises to bear fruit in both areas. The five-day visit resulted in economic, technological and cultural cooperation agreements between the two states. Egypt also received a \$4 million grant, and China is to build a free zone at the port city of Alexandria to market its

President Mubarak has had two meet-ings with Jiang since his arrival on Mon-day on the third leg of a six-state tour of Africa. Their discussions focused on hilateral relations, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and political coordination in both the regional and the international arenas.

The two countries have in commoo ancient civilisations, and both have developed into key regional powers. Egypt, with its leading role in Africa and the Arab world, and China, a prominent nuclear state with veto power on the UN Security Council and a fast growing ecocomy, both have strong faith in their relationship and aspire to develop it further.

China has always supported Arab causes, and as a permanent member of the Se-curity Council has frequently stood by them. Last month, China backed Egypt's position for lighter diplomatic sanctions against Sudan instead of the strong economic sanctions or an arms embargo proposed by the US. China takes a more moderate stand than the US in continuing sanctions against Iraq, because it believes that imposing sanctions on any country harms its people. It also supported the Arab viewpoint when Israel shelled Lebanon for 17 days. Egypt complained that

ington's military aid to Tel Aviv, causes a 'dangerous imbalance" in the region.

China concurs with the Arab viewpoint that US diplomacy in the region does not sufficiently take into account the interests of Arab countries and it has called upon the Americans to "pay greater respect to the viewpoints of Arab nations". Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said that China believes that any solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict "must consider the interests of all sides in a peaceful and balanced process".

China, which has always supported the peace process, has many interests in the birth of a peaceful and stable Middle East, first and foremost being that the region has the potential to be an even greater market for Chinese products. During his talks with Mubarak, Jiang said that stronger Sino-Arab relations were in the interest of all parties. He reiterated this sentiment after meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel-Meguid, saying that his country was striving to develop Sino-Arah relations in the coming period.

China established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, only after the wheels of the peace process had begun to turn. Since then, relations have developed rapidly, especially in economic areas. "Our belief is that the relationship between China and Israel, based oo equality and mutual benefit, is in the interest of the entire Arab world," said Sheng Guofang, spokesman for the Chinese president while in Egypt,

In the international arena, Egypt looks to China to balance out Western biases in such conflicts as the Lockerbie crisis, and the suffering of the Iraqi people. "The new world order is in dire need of China's independent stands. China is a great power playing an important role on the world

stage," commented Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

During their discussions, the two presidents stressed that "all nations great and small, rich and poor, should stand on an equal footing and participate in managing world affairs." Sheng reported.

In a veiled reference to the tension in Sino-American relations over the maverick state of Taiwan, China said that "no country should interfere in the affairs of other countries, and threats do not solve problems". In a more general sense, Beijing believes that "all problems should be solved through consultations and negotiations", a viewpoint which can be taken to include the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the struggles on the African continent.

On the domestic economic front, Egypt, itself implementing an austere economic reform programme, takes great interest in China's economic miracle. Moussa said that cooperation with China in all fields was particularly important, because of its size and political and economic weight. Mubarak and Jiang witnessed on Tues-

day the signing of three agreements dealing with economic, technical and cultural cooperation. The first includes a \$4 million dollar grant to Egypt, which comes second only to South Africa as a recipient of Chinese aid on the African continent. Within the Arab world, only Saudi Arabia receives more funds from China.

In addition, China is to build a goods promotion centre in Alexandria, similar to the free zone in Port Said, for its products, an idea first suggested by Mubarak while visiting Beijing in 1994. Egypt imports textiles, electrical, chemical and agricultural goods from China, and imports



Hosni Mubarak with China's President Jiang Zemin photo: AFP

million. On the other hand, Egyptian exports, mainly consisting of raw cottoo and steel, add up to only \$15 million.

The Egyptian side has repeatedly expressed dismay at these figures, describing them as "very weak" in comparison to Dubai's \$1 billioo and Israel's \$800 million trade with China. While China describes economic relations as "good, hut occding gradual development", Egypt is eager to see trade between the two countries multiply many times over.

Sheng told Al-Ahram Weekly that steps will be made on both sides to increase trade following Jiang's visit. "We should import more goods from Egypt," Sheng acknowledged. However, the problem lies with the Egyptian side, mainly because of its uncompetitive prices. "Our trade is free and we export everything the Egyptians need," be said, "and we hope that Egypt will provide us with a more detailed programme for export goods which are suitable for the Chinese market."

Egyptian officials said that the two countries was not pro-portionate to the ambitions of both eaderships. While China believes that joint ventures and investment by the private sector are a more economic relations, there are onlynine Chinese investment projects in Egypt, worth \$45 million alto-gether. Although initiatives by businessmen from both countries are minimal, "the two [leaders] ac-knowledged that their countries, field of investment." Sheng said.

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- Jiang also met with parliament speaker Fathi, Sorour and Shura Council chairman Mustafa Kamaf Helmi. Yesterday, he visited a ceramics factory in the 10th of Ramadan City, as well as a carpet fac-tory. The Chinese delegation included the foreign minister, the minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, as well as the minister of interior. Jiang's visit to Egypt, the first

since he became president in 1993, is part of his inaugural tour of the continent, aimed at strengthening Sino-African relations. It began with visits to Kenya and Ethiopia, and he will continue to Mali, Namibia and Zimbabwe. While in Addis Abeba, Jiang visited the Organ-isation of African Unity (OAU) head-quarters and met with its secretarygeneral Salem Ahmed Salem. In a show of further support and interest in Sino-African relations, Jiang donated \$300,000:

On the high-tech road

The Ministry of Education's new technology centre could help build a new generation of savvy computer users. Rania Khallaf reports

Mrs Suzanne Mubarak inaugurated the restored Ministry of Education huilding this week and its new Technological Development Centre (TDC). The building - originally a palace - was constructed by Khedive Ismail in 1872 for his adopted daughter Faiqa Hanem upon her marriage to Mustafa Pasha. Hit by the 1992 earthquake, the building on El-Falaki Street in downtown Cairo had to be re-

The TDC is newly established as part of the national educational plan initiated in 1992 by President Hosni Mubarak who declared that educational development is the starting point for a society that can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The centre will research and initiate studies to keep abreast of the rapid international development of educational translating scientific programmes and ter-

learning, and to disseminate the technology and methods in schools. The TDC will produce the ministry's first video and CD-ROM educational programmes on subjects like science, physics and maths and will be connected to the Internet and to school

training centres by satellite.

Annually, 12,000 teachers will be given special training courses in communications technology, said Raafat Khaled, a prominent official at the Ministry of Education, as will students at the faculties of educa-

The project, said Dr Venese Kamel Gouda, Minister of Scientific Research, will encourage other governmental and private schools to apply new learning systems and train a skilled new generation of scientific researchers. The ministry participated in technology, like multi-media computer minology into Arabic and preparing multi- 1868 and 1891.

media student computer programmes.

The Ministry of Education plans to establish other technological development centres in various governorates to directly supervise advanced learning methods in newly established schools.

Since 1992 the Ministry of Education has established 5,500 schools throughout the country and has started to provide 2,000 of these schools with new educational devices, particularly computers to gather and analyse scientific data, electronic libraries and educational museums.

The restoration of the palace, which cost LE11 million, retains its architectural style. The palace is decorated with stained glass, gilded ornaments and Roman columns. The first floor of the building includes the office of Ali Mubarak, a pioneer thinker and Min-



Mrs Sazanne Mubarak meets students at the new Technological Development Centre photo:Ahmed Afifi

The espionage trial of a former naval sergeant Doctors has stirred controversy in his home village about Egyptians working in Israel. Omayma

Espionage case rocks Delta village Abdel-Latif visits Nawasa El-Gheit '80s, most of residents had a relative or two working in Iraq. But after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Gulf

> to come by and many sought employment opportunities in Germany, France, After restrictions imposed on travelling to Israel were lifted in 1994, word spread of the huge salaries available in Israel for those who work at the Aqaba Gulf port of Eilat. Eager job-seckers rushed to try their luck, mostly finding

> War the following year, people looked to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Still, jobs were hard

work in construction. The situation has led some religious leaders in the village to issue a fatwa to forbid travelling to Israel. During his Friday prayers sermon, Sheikh Wagih Sabe of Omar Adei Mosque declared money from Israel as haram (for-bidden). He cited the example of Hamza El-Kaliouby, the first villager to work in Israel, who came back with LE8,000

and bought goods to set up a business. His goods were stolen the very next day.

"This is a strong evidence that this money has no benefits," says the sheikh. But some argue that since the money was in return for work which does not inflict barm on the country it is halal

(lawful) money.

Both El-Tanony and El-Garyia believe that the government should seriously consider revising the decision which lifted the restrictions on travelling to Israel. "These restrictions should be reactivated since the Israelis are now fighting with covert weapons," El-

attack medical normalisation

THE HEAD of the Doctors' Syndicate, Dr Hamdi El-Sayed, has called upon all Egyptians to stopsecking jobs and medical treatment in Israel, reports Omayma Abdel-Latif

El-Sayed, who is also a Na-tional Democratic Party (NDP) member of parliament, said the phenomenon of young Egyptian labourers seeking work in Israel was "a national disgrace". "It is shameful that our young

man have to earn their living by working for the Israelis," El-Sayed told Al-Ahram Weekly. The syndicate head accused unnamed "brokers of normalisation".

as being responsible for this "na-tional disgrace".

He added that a request might be submitted to the People's Assembly to investigate the in-creasing numbers of Egyptians seeking work in Israel.

The Israelis are no more med ically advanced than us. It is un-true that Israel has better medical care or treatment, but the normalisation brokers, who have lost any sense of patrionism to Egypt, try to portray Israel as heaven on earth," said El-Sayed.

In a related development, file Doctors' Syndicate is taking discretizations.

ciplinary action against a doctor who recently visited Israel.

Normalisation with Israel is banned, according to the regu-lations of the syndicate's general assembly, and any doctor who does not abide by these regu-

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Almost two months after the news broke that a resident of the Delta village Nawasa El-Gheit has been charged with providing Israel with military secrets, locals still find it difficult to believe. Abdel-Malek Abdel-Moneim Hamed, a former naval sergeant, has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him and his trial has been ad-

journed until next Saturday.

We were shocked by the news that someone from the Hamed family has been spying for Israel. This village has pro-duced hundreds of martyrs whose tales of heroism are still fresh in our memory. Had Hamed fallen into the hands of the people, they would have torn him to pieces," one villager told Al-Ahram Weekly on the con-

dition of anonymity.
One morning last March, locals woke up to find that their village was under siege. Hundreds of police officers and tens of armoured vehicles sealed off the village and began searching for the accused villager who allegedly sold secrets to Israel. The hunt and subsequent arrest of Hamed thrust Nawasa El-Gheit into the limelight perhaps for the first time in its history
 and left residents dumbfounded.

Another villager said, "If he were to be trayed Egypt, he betrayed us - his neighbors, relatives and even his sons and daughters who did not have the slightest idea about their father's crimes."

There is hardly anything unusual about Nawasa El-Ghiet, located 120km north of Cairo, that would make it stand out among the hundreds of other Delta villages surrounding it. But media reports claim the village is notorious for exporting its young men to work in Israel. Residents, however,

deeply resent these reports which they say are totally unfounded. The number of those who went to work

in Israel is no more than 60 out of a population of 50,000. Some magazines claim the oumber is 4,000, but this is not true," said lawyer Osama El-Garyia, a resident

"We still hold on to 'a psychological barrier", said El-Garyia, referring to the term coined by the late President Anwar El-Sadat, who urged that the "psychological barrier" between the Arabs and Israel should be removed. "We were born. with it and not even a hundred peace treaties will make us change our views. In this village every house has had somebody killed by an Israeli soldier during the wars of 1967 and 1973. Even the few numbers that sought work in Israel were always looked down upon by the villagers. Many parents could not accept the fact that their sons work for the Israelis no matter how

much they pay," El-Garyia said.

After the disclosure of the espionage affair, officials of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) in the village said that the oumber of those working in Israel has decreased. And many villagers who were working there have now returned home. "People doo't want problems. They were earning a living, but if Israel wants to play dirty and exploit our labour, there is no need for their money," said Mohamed Ba-dawi El-Tanony, the head of the Nawasa municipality and the village's NDP repre-

According to one doctor, the village's recent past closely mirrors the political and economic changes the region has gone through during the past decade. In the late

Upper Egypt on air

After nearly four months of testing the airwaves, the Upper Egyptian channel 8 is now ready for ... the TV screens. Rehab Saad reports

For the very first time, Egypt's southernmost governorates of Qena, Sohag and Aswan will have their share of the spotlight, on the oew Channel 8. "We want to show people who we are: our culture, our traditions and our life," said the channel's head, Hashem Ghaleb, "because some believe we come

The station grew from two hours of pre-ifiar ex-perimental hroadcasting last Ramadan to eight hours a day since April. It is scheduled to broadcast even more as of 31 May, when it will be in-augurated by Minister of Information Safwat El-

Sherif on Media Day. The new channel makes Egypt's regional coverage more comprehensive, adding Upper Egypt to

the Suez Canal cities' Channel 4, Alexandria's Channel 5, the Delta's Channel 6 and Minya and Assiut's Channel 7.

Channel 8 programming plans range from tourism and news bulletins to features on Upper Egyptian customs, folkloric arts, health and local agriculture. Man-on-the-street interviews are also a priority "in an attempt to find out their problems and to create a relationship between the public and the channel,"

Since all Channel 8 employees are from Qena, Sohag and Aswan, they will have the opportunity to demonstrate their talent as broadcasters and even as actors, said Ghaleb. The station's studios "can per-

the national channels I and 2, Cairo's Channel 3, haps serve as their starting point in the world of

Equipped with three video cameras (and expecting another three), 16 directors, 15 script writers, nine interviewers, three news anchors, six programme announcers, five translators and administrative cadre, Hashem Ghaleb is confident that the new channel has enough potential to compete with Cairo TV stations, especially if they present riddles of their own next Ramadan: "The riddles will be part of our culture," he said. "They will mainly be about saidi (Upper Egyptian) personalities who played important, positive roles in our society, like writers Abbas El-Aqqad and Refaa El-Tahtawi."

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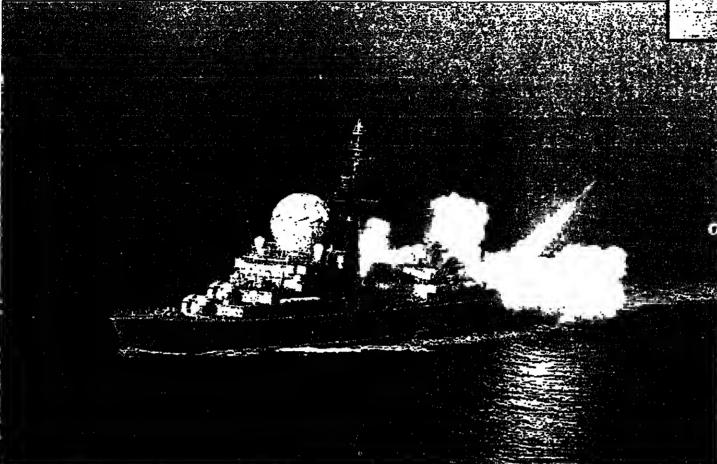
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Cleopatra '96

Egypt, France and Italy joined this week in naval war games that chalked up some firsts: Italy participated for the first time and France used a nuclear-powered submarine for the first time.

Galal Nassar reports on the exercises and ponders their political implications



The French frigate Duquesne fires an anti-aircraft missile

photos; Hussein Fathi

The Mediterranean's nidest and strongest naval powers — Egypt, France and Italy — jnined hands in naval war games this week, deploying a total of 13 naval units off Egypt's northern shores. The exercise, dubbed "Cleopatra 96", began on Saturday and was due to end today. Egypt and France have been conducting joint naval manocuvres every other year since 1992. This year, Italy joined for the first time.

The exercise was divided into three main stages: the first, which began last Saturday, involved conferences among commanders to draw up training and action plans; the second, which started on Tuesday, consisted of mock battles at sea, about 100 nautical miles from the Egyptian coast and extending all the way from Marsa Matrouh in the west to El-Borollos Lake in the east; the third and final phase on Wednesday and Thursday included training to repel air attacks on naval targets as well as meetings among commanders to evaluate the war games and draw lessons from them.

The battle scenario ran like this: enemy naval units guard a ship carrying an important consignment, friendly maits intercept the enemy vessels and attack them with naval gams and missiles as well as warplanes; the head-on battle is followed by live-ammunition shooting exercises, including the use of surface-to-surface

Of the 13 naval units in the games, Egypt contributed seven — the US-made Knox-class destroyer Domiat, the Spanish-built corvette Suez, a Chinese-made Romeo-class submarine and

four missile-launching boats. Egypt also pitched in with a number of F-16 jetfighters, naval reconnaissance planes and helicopters. France participated with four vessels — the anti-submarine frigate Dupleix, the missile-armed frigate Duquesne, the command and supply ship Marne and the nuclear-powered submarine Emraude. The French units were manned by a total of 900 sailors. The Italian contingent consisted of two frigates, the Zeffiro and the Sfinge.

The units participating in the mock battles set out at first light on Tuesday, splitting into two forces; a blue force representing the enemy, consisting of Egyptian, French and Italian vessels under a French commander; and the friendly orange force, also with vessels from the three countries but under an Egyptian commander. The French ship Mame played the part of the enemy ship carrying important cargo and the bloe force guarded it. The orange force attacked the enemy with air cover provided by Egyptian F-16 fighters.

During the mock fighting the two sides performed training exercises in refuelling, moving wounded personnel, rescuing drowning seamen and salvaging equipment. The night-time battles featured electronic warfare and radar jamming. Submarines also played their part, trying to dodge underwater sonar to avoid detection. On Wednesday morning, the blue and orange forces teamed up for a jnint exercise to repel enemy aircraft attacking the naval formation comprising all 13 vessels. The raiding aircraft were

Egyptian F-16s that came under naval fire from

rocket launchers and surface-to-air missiles. A

shooting drill fullowed, using live surface-tosurface and surface-to-air missiles, before the joint fleet returned to base in Alexandria,

Egypt's Vice Admiral Essam Badawi, the Navy's director of training, told Al-Ahram Weekly that "Cleopatra 96" is the third hiennial round of war games since 1992. Italy is participating this year for the first time at its own request, he added,

"Apart from the US 6th Fleet, Egypt, France and Italy are the nldest and strongest oaval powers in the Mediterranean, "Badawi said. "So their naval forces had to strive in establish close friendly links among their infficers for the sake of Mediterranean security and stability." He ooted that this was the first time France threw in a nuclear-powered submarine, "and this changed the tactical concept of the manoeuvres this year. We concentrated on submarine detection and repelling enemy attacks."

pelling enemy attacks."

Badawi also remarked that the war games combined advanced Western-made armament with Eastern-built weaponry developed with Egyptian expertise to test them on an actual theater of operations. Another noteworthy feature, he said, was the use of Egyptian missile-launching boats of the Ramadan class. "It is well-known that Egypt is the best country in the world in the use of missile-launching boats in combat," Badawi said. "We have had experience

Captain Marin Gillier, the French Naval Attache in Cairo, spoke tn Al-Ahram Weekly about what he perceived as important highlights of the manocuvres. "The exercise this year involved

both dsy-time and night-time action and is bound to have many henefits, foremost among them the collective and cooperative effort made in supply, movement of ships at sea and shooting at surface targets." He also cited antisubmarine warfare and action against raiding F-16 aircraft as well as the use of ship-based

Gillier said that Egyptian and French naval officers began meetings in Egypt and France

last March to prepare for the war games.

Egypt launched a new policy of joint military manoeuvres with firreign countries after signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Most prominent among these exercises is the "Bright Star" series held every two years with the United States in Egypt's Western Desert and along the northern coast. The latest in this series was conducted in 1995 and lasted seven days. It was by far the biggest to date: besides the United States and Egypt, it included contingents from Britain, France and the United Arab Emirates. A total of 56.000 troops participated in it aloog with 800 aircraft and 30 naval units, including an aircraft carrier. The types of ground forces taking part included infantry, mechanised units, armour, paratroops, commandos, marines and electronic warfare personnel.

Egypt has been holding joint naval exercises with the United States and Britain in the Red Sea in June every year. Egypt and Britain also have a separate series of joint naval manoeuvres dubbed "Sea Winds" in the Mediterranean.

The politics behind

PARTICIPATION in the "Cleopatra 96" joint naval war games with Egypt and Italy is France's latest move in a five-year-old effort to project itself as a force to be reckoned with in the Middle East and Gulf regions. France elearly wants in counterbalance the influence of the United States in the two region.

France was a member of the international military alliance,

France was a member of the international military alliance, led by the US, which ejected firaqi troops from Kuwait in 1991. After the war, France began vying with the US for a presence in the Gulf, concluding several joint defence agreements with Gulf countries and began to provide them with arms. It also jnined in promoting their economic and industrial development. In his book The Black and the Green — Fundamentalism,

In his book The Black and the Green — Fundamentalism, Oil and the Dollar, France's former Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chévénement wrote in a chapter devoted to US policy that the Gulf War was primarily "a war against Europe behind its back". He said the conflict in the Gulf between Europe and Japan, on the one hand, and the US, on the other, was essentially a conflict of strategic and economic interests.

It was natural that France should try to regain an effective

presence in the Middle East in restore the equilibrium.

Having established a footing in the Gulf militarily and economically, France stepped into the Arab-Israeli fray at the height of Israel's massive attacks on southern Lebanon following suicide bombings inside Israel last February. France sent its foreign minister in the region to help negotiate a truce and he made parallel shuttles with those undertaken by US Secretary in State Warren Christopher. France contributed

handsomely to the truce eventually concluded last month.

Now, France is back in prominence in the region, joining

Egypt and Italy in naval exercises in the Mediterranean.

In an interview published last February, French Defence Minister Charles Millon emphasised France's interest in Middle East issues, especially those involving Lebanon and Syria, in the light of the accelerating efforts for a peace settlement with Israel, France wants to have a role in security guarantees in southern Lebanon and Syria's Golan Heights in an eventual peace agreement with Israel.

Under the recent truce between Lebanon and Israel, France became one of the countries making up a supervision mechanism. Other members of the team are the US, Israel, Syria

and Lebanon.

French President Jacques Chirac has a clear vision of what France should do to rebuild its stature in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. Chirac has selected what be considers a "guaranteed" ally to serve as France's bridge to the Arab world and a point of rest in the Mediterranean basin — Lebanon. France is contributing substantially to Lebanon's reconstruction after 15 years of civil war.

Chirac also believes that it is in Europe's interest to look south and deal with the Arab countries overlooking the southern shores of the Mediterranean — a process that has already started. Chirac views the US role of peace broker in the Middle East as being tilted in Israel's favour. Consequently, he holds that France should play a full balancing role in an Arablsraeli peace settlement. "We must play our part in full to save the peace process and to entrench a settlement," he said. This position explains the part France played in achieving last mooth's Israel-Lebanno truce. Chirac also has described the Gulf region as "an excellent ally and economic and strategic

partner" for Europe generally and France in particular.

France's current active movement toward the Middle East and the southern countries of the Mediterranean basin, including Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, is an integral part of French strategy. This includes participation with these countries in economic, military and security activities. French participatinn, along with Italy, the current chairman of the European Union, in the "Cleopatra 96" oaval manoeuvres is clear evidence that Paris fully realises that Egypt is a key to the Middle East and Mediterranean regions.

Monumental appeal in parliament

Recent parliamentary debates and a long speech delivered by Abdel-Halim Noureddin, secretarygeneral of the Higher Antiquities Council (HAC), to the Culture, Tourism and Information committees of the People's Assembly have revealed that there is a pressing need for a wide-scale national campaign to restore some of Egypt's most

precious monuments.

The parliamentary debates raised two main concerns: one is that national development plans could negatively affect Egyptian monuments and the other is that restoring the monuments could destabilise social conditions in areas where monuments are

densely populated by poor families.

According to Noureddin, a number of national development plans are currently posing a direct threat in monuments and antiquities. "For example, we now have problems with the Irrigation Ministry because the El-Salam canal project in Sinai could directly destroy a number of antiquities there," he said. He pointed out that some sections of the new line of the Cairo underground metro, the Sound and Light structure in the Pyramids area and the Mena

House Hotel in Giza were all "floating on a sea of

Noureddin insisted that the new ring road being constructed around Cairo and the bridge being built over the Nile in Luxor could both seriously threaten priceless monuments. The Luxor bridge, he said, was being erected despite opposition from the HAC and a presidential decree that bans anything being constructed within six kilnmetres of ancient sites.

According to Noureddin, the Luxor bridge lies just 400 metres away from antiquities on the west bank of the Nile. The HAC's secretary-general added, furthermore, that his organisation's consent to the Cairo ring road was "a grave mistake".

"The fact is that most people here in Egypt still forget that these monuments are no longer nurs, but are now under UNESCO's direct supervision," said Noureddin. "We do not have the right to undertake any projects that could seriously affect historical monuments." Noureddin concluded that the two objectives of establishing new development projects and preserving old monuments should go hand in hand; one should not be at the expense of the niher.

Another problem is that the HAC faces a severe shortage of funds. "As a matter of fact we oeed as many as 6,000 flats in house people who may be evicted from homes near as many as 600 Islamic and Coptic monuments in Cairo; we cannot just throw them into the streets," said Noureddin. In Luxor, the HAC needs 2,500 flats to house families currently living in the El-Korana antiquities area, which bolds a third of the world's ancient monuments, including the Valley of the Kings.

"The problem is that encroachments on antiquities and mooumeots are made not only by poor families, but also by state authorioes," said Noureddin. "For example, the Education Ministry occupies 14 historical moouments, the ruling National Democrate Party occupies 10, fire and water statinns occupy 62, while 75 monuments in the Islamic area of El-Azhar and Ghouriya are leased as shops." Nnureddin mentinoed, however, that a recently formed national committee had managed to rid 148 monuments of encroachments in Upper Egypt out of a total 691 affected, 30 nut of 367 in the Delta, and 71 out of 730 in Cairo and Giza.

But the costs of restoring monuments in Egypt are exorbitant. "We need LE35 million to restore the Hanging Church in Coptic Cairo and LE35 million to restore the Islamic area of Ghouriya. Mnouments at the Citadel in Cairo need LE25-30 million, and Luxor mnnuments need between LE15-17 million," said Noureddin. In all, the HAC needs as much as LE500 million a year to launch a large-scale campaign to restore Egyptian monuments. Unfortunately, according to Nnureddin, the HAC's annual revenues are only in the region of LE80-90 million — mainly generated from the sale of tickets to historical sites.

The HAC's secretary-general was happy to mention, however, that his organisation, which employs up to 26,000 personnel, had recently received a \$15 million grant from the United States Congress and LE150,000 from the Arab Development Fund. President Hosni Muharak has also approved the allocation of LE100 million for restoration work, of which LE30 million is destined for the Pyramids area.

Salah El-Taroty, chairman of the Assembly's Culture Committee, said that the earthquake of 1992 threw into sharp focus the fact that many ancient Egyptian monuments were crumbling to pieces. He criticised the poor technical qualifications of contractors undertaking the repair work. According to him, the recent collapse of the ceiling in the Mosque of Amr ibn El-Ass was largely due to unprofessional restoration.

Yehia Shaalan, parliamentary deputy for Luxor, and Radwan El-Shaer, deputy for the Pyramids area in Giza, laid blame at the feet of Culture Minister Farouk Hosni and the HAC. The deputies both felt that the HAC had not formulated a clear-cut strategy oo restoration work and that Hosni rarely paid field visits to historical mnouments. Other deputies called for a number of district museums to be established and for there to be tighter control to pre-

vent the smuggling of Egyptian antiquities.

Noureddin concluded that Egypt's historical monuments required more help than the HAC alone could give. "It oeeds the efforts of everynne and the collaboration of the ministries of Culture, Education, Local Administration, Agriculture, the Interior and Awaaf to save some of Egypt's most precious ancient treasures," be said.

Coasting along ancient routes

A team of nautical archaeologists have made the first survey ever of shipwrecks off Egypt's Mediterranean coast to discover more about trade in earlier eras. Hala Halim investigates



L-r: A Koan amphora (late third to early second century BC) found at Ras Hawala; the stone sand anchor being raised at Ras El-Hikma

Permits from almost every authority sbort of Neptune were needed for the preliminary archaeological survey of shipwrecks along Egypt's north-west Mediterranean coast, conducted this spring. The survey, undertaken by a team from the Egyptian branch of the US Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) in cooperation with the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), was confirmed by SCA Secretary-General Abdel-Halim Noureddin as being the first of its kind to take place along this stretch of the Med-

iterranean coast.

Chies for possible sites were mostly based on the observations of local spear fishermen and snorkellers, explained Douglas Haldane, the American director of the team. But amphorae reportedly sighted on reefs or on the sea bed were not necessarily taken to indicate the presence of shipwrecks, since they could simply have been dumped by a crew in the process of cleaning a ship's hold. Another reason for scepticism, Haldane elaborated, was that

the ships and their cargoes, having

sunk in shallow water, have been spread along the sea bed by the waves, thus losing much of their intrinsic archaeological value." However, given that scriba-diving is a relatively recent activity which was in any case prohibited along that stretch of coast for military reasons, plunder of archaeological remains did not present o threat—in contrast to the Red Sea where looting of submerged sites occurs on a regular ha-

The team surveyed 16 reported sites from Sidi Abdel-Rahman to

Ras Hawala, taking in six ancient harbours and one anchorage and investigating land sites in the hope that they would yield evidence relating to sea-faring. Part of the team's immediate aim was to find out how research equipment and strategies were to be adapted to the peculiarities of the Egyptian Mediterranean coast. The survey's wider thjective was, as Haldane put it, "to build a body of knowledge [nn nau-

tical archaenlogy in the Mediterranean in Egypt], to network and create a dialogue with others working in the field elsewhere."

ing in the field elsewhere."

As if to underscore the importance of this objective, the team came upon a significant find on land at Ras Gibesa, recalling other finds made in the Red Sea. The small fragment of porcelain from a peonyscroll dish was reminiscent of porcelain ware that formed part of the

Edited by Wadie Kirolos

cargo of a late-seventeenth century wreck of a merchant ship near Sadana Island in the Red Sea, surveyed by the INA-SCA team last summer. While pieces of the same type of porcelain have been found in Turkey, indicating one possible trade route followed by the Sadana ship, this shard revealed that another destination of the ship's cargo could have been North Africa.

Some of Egypt's most precious monuments are crumbling to pieces. The

Higher Antiquities Council has been making the case for urgent action

North Africa.

But providence was not always so bountiful: no certain sites, recalcitrant weather conditions prohibited divers from inspecting reported shipwrecks. In Bir Saleh, for example, the team could not investigate the shipwreck, but nevertheless found nn land opposite the harbour a fresh water well, remains nf huildings and coins. Most interestingly, however, the site was littered

with glass shards of many colnurs, indicating that a glass production centre had once existed in the area. At Ras El-Hikma, oo the other hand, the team were able to verify the fishermen's accounts of broken and intact amphorae around an island near the coast.

From the abundance of archaeological remains found on this site, Haldane believes that a number of ships sank here. In addition to hits of wood covering the sea bed, a stone sand anchor was found and raised. The amphorae found at the Ras El-Hikma site date from the

first century BC to the seventh century AD, and come from different parts of the Mediterranean. Here, as elsewhere, the contents of the amphorae were empried and sifted of sand, the remaining organic material to be analysed later for clues to the ships' cargoes.

The earliest archaeological evidence was found at the team's last stop, Ras Hawala (ancient Calamaeum or Promontory of Callias) — a North Aegean amphora dating between the fourth and third centuries BC. Among other objects found at Ras Hawala was a Byzantine iron anchor "of a type dated in other contexts from the seventh to the ninth century AD". On the way to the harbour, the team came upon "a large beachrock city wall", but the remains of the ancient city were covered by dunes.

Although Haldane had hoped to

discover a Bronze Age, or Pharaonic, shipwreck, the possibility is not precluded when the team undertakes a more in-depth survey next autumn. Among other sites, the team plan to investigate the area of Marsa Matrouh: late Bronze Age Cypriot ware has been found there, and a border fortress of Ramses II exists at the oearby Zawiet Umm Rakham. As with this preliminary survey, adds Emad Khalil of the INA, the team will be jnined by archaeology students from the Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, for whom such surveys provide their only training in nautical archaeology.

Fishing ban stings fishermen

A two-month ban on fishing in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea imposed by the General Authority for Fish Resource Development, an affiliate of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), has left fisherman smarting under the sun with noth-

ing but coupty nets.
The decree, which was issued on 27 March and went into effect on 1 May, has been severely criticised on the grounds that it will put nearly 40,000 isherman out of work and leave 2,000 fishing boats beached. Moreover, critics state, it will cause the price of fish to soar. The duration of the ban was later halved

Abbas El-Tarabili, a columnist at Ai-Wafd newspaper, the mouthpiece of the opposition Wafd Party, described this decree as a blow against fisherman in villages surrounding Damietta, Port Said and Alexandria. Residents of these villages depend on fishing for their live-lihood. He added that the oegative effects of the decree will not be limited to fishermen. Those working in the maintenance of fishing vessels, nets and ice factories, as well as owners of fish shops, will also be hard hit.

Officials at the MOA, however, state that the decree is in the long-term interests of fishermen as it protects fish by banning fishing during the breeding sea-

At a stormy parliamentary session in the People's Assembly on 5 May, angry MPs called for the cancellation of "such a sudden and unjust decree" which af-fects the livelihood of thousands of fishermen. MPs noted that since most of the fish in the Mediterranean do not stay in one location, the ban will have no real impact. Therefore, they questioned, what function will the decree actually serve. In a measure of compromise, Minister of Agriculture Youssef Wali reduced the duration of the ban to one month.

The reduction, however, did not garner rave reviews from fishermen. Immediately after the decree was issued, fishermen in Ezbet El-Borg, a Mediterranean A ban on fishing in the Mediterranean and Red Sea during the fish breeding season has fishermen seeing red. Mona El-Nahhas

reports

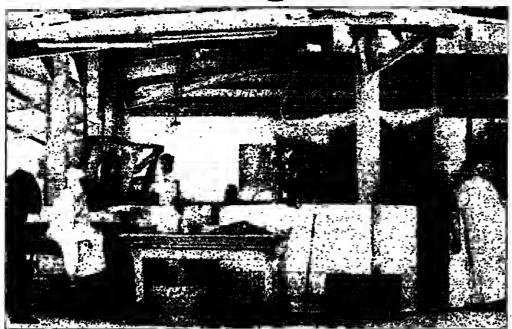


photo: Mohamed Attia

town in the Damietta Governorate, staged angry demonstrations, calling on the Damietta chief of security to intervene and either lift the ban or pay a suitable compensation to fishermen. The fishing fleet in Ezbet El-Borg, they note, accounts for nearly 70 per cent of

Egypt's total fishing fleet. The effects of the decree in Ezhat El-Borg are already visible. On a tour of the city, Al-Ahram Weekly observed that the majority of the fishermen were doing everything but fishing - playing cards, drinking coffee or staying home. More-over, hundreds of fishing vessels were anchored to the shore and covered. The fish markets were also deserted. "Without fishing, all of us will die of hunger," commented an elderly woman.

The whole town depends on fishing

as the main source of income," said Mustafa Abdel-Hamid, a fisherman. "We have no other means of earning

Damietta fishmongers are seeing hard times

Other fishermen like Ahmed Kamal hinted that the decree came about as a result of political considerations and lobbying on the part of the fish farm industry and the importers of frozen fish. These sectors, with their contacts and big officials are the ones who will benefit from the decree since they will be able to raise their prices in response to the shortage of fish in the market," he

As readily as the complaints and charges poured forth on the part of fishermen, so too did alternatives. Nasr Abmed, an owner of a fishing trawler, suggested that it would be more effective to

issue a decree which bans fishing within 2km of the shoreline, but allowing fish-ermen to fish in deeper waters. This would be the best way to protect fish during the breeding season," he said.

Officials at the General Authority for Fish Resource Development, however, would not be baited. "This fishing ban was not a sudden decision," said Abdallah Hammad, chairman of the GAFRD. "It was issued after nearly six months of negotiations with the fishermen's union and concerned scientific institutions." The fishermen's union, Hammad noted, approved the decree on 30

Countering allegations that the decree came as a result of outside lobbying pressure, Hammad stated that it aims "to protect our fish supplies, especially in

are dwindling as a result of overfishing." It is, he said, the first time that Egypt has banned fishing in the Mediterranean, but a similar policy has been in place in the Red Sea from May to September and in the northern lakes for two to six months per year.

"All the Mediterranean rim countries

impose a similar ban every year," added Hammad.

The decree, he explained, was based on recommendations by the UNaffiliated Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the National Oceanographic institute, which called for the elimination of 30 per cent of the country's fishing fleet and bearing fishing during the breeding season.

"Taking into consideration the needs

of the fishermen, we decided to adopt the second recommendation," he said. The authority had already decided in October 1992 to stop issuing new licences for fishing vessels. The decision was im-plemented in January 1994 to give owners of fishing vessels enough time to finish ongoing construction. However, said Hammad, most of the fishermen violated the decree even after it went into effect and continued to build new vessels.

Addressing the topic of fish prices in relation to the decree, Hammad stated that the catch from the Mediterranean accounts for only 12 per cent of the total catch. "Most of our stock comes from the northern lakes, the Nile and fish farms," he said. Therefore, "those who claim that the ban will slash the size of the catch and lead to a subsequent rise in market price are wrong," noted Hammad. "The price of fish on the market, he explained, was already high before the hen was imposed but this was a result of greed on the part of merchants rather than a product of supply and demand.

The authority, he stated, will not com-

pensate fishermen for the losses resulting from the one-month ban. This is the responsibility of the fishermen's associations and unions" he said.

Halfway ranking

EGYPT's competitive position was the topic of debate during a lecture organised by the Economic Research Forum (ERF) last week. Niveen Wahish attended. According to Heba Handoussa, managing director of the ERF and the keynote. speaker at the lecture, Egypt ranked 27th out of to-tal of 48 countries in the World Economic Forum's 1995 World Competitiveness Report (WCR).

This is a very favourable position given the fact that among the other countries listed in the report were the 25 most advanced member countries. of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)," said Handoussa. In the WCR, the economic conditions of 48 para

ticipating countries were evaluated using 380 different features relating to the performance in eight main groupings: domestic economic strength, the infrastructure, international status, management, government, science and technology, finance and

The report shows that although the size of Egypt's market and the country's gross domesticproduct (GDP) ranked 39th, and in terms of percapita income it ranked 42nd, it was 19th in terms of domestic market growth and 4th in terms of the low cost of living.

It also ranged in ranking from 7 to 14 for its production of energy, crude oil, industrial chemicals, nice and maize. The country topped the list in terms of covering its imports through export revenues, and ranked 5th in the growth rate of commercial services exports. In terms of the share of commercial services to GDP, Egypt placed 6th.

Egypt, however, did not receive high marks for:

the performance of its commodities exports. This said Handoussa, will hopefully be rectified through the implementation of trade liberalisation measures and legislative reforms by the govern-

Handoussa also stated that, in her opinion; therreport highlighted three main prospects for Egypt's future. First, in relation to its level of income, the Egyptian government is well off and commands the revenue of about one-third of the country's GDP. Consequently, "there is encurrous." room for re-allocating its expenditures so as to capitalise on potential private sector investment. she said. In her opinion, this would release a major portion of the public investment budget, which can be channelled towards improving social services, environmental control and dramage sys-

There is also room, she said, for a shift in the focus of expenditure within the budget for educational and health services; and research and development. This shift would favour providing basic services and conducting research designed to raise industrial productivity. Given the great-strides made in Egypt's stabilisation and structural reform programmes, the country's economic productivity is a lot better than the level reflected. by the indicators of credit worthiness and risk.

Free trade accord

LAST week in Amman, following more than a year of discussions, Egypt and Jordan signed a free trade accord. This accord, which will go into effect on 1 Jamary 1997, is the first accord of its

kind between Jordan and another Arab country.

A statement issued by a joint committee headed by Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal El-Gauzouri. and Jordan's Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Al-Kabariti, said, 'The free trade agreement represents an advanced element in Arab economic ties." The free trade accord allows for the exchange of the commodities of both countries without applying customs duties, it also provides for the free transfer of money and labour.

During the two-day talks, the Egyptian-Jordaman joint committee also signed pacts to promote joint investments in tourism and prevent dual taxation. The two countries are already involved in a number of joint projects. These include an electric grid connection, mutual concessions between Aqaba and Egyptian ports, a joint company for investment and development in agriculture and animal wealth projects.

Potential investment areas are pharmaceuticals, engineering, spare parts and intermediate chem-

Jordan and Egypt are currently negotiating their respective partnership agreements with the Eu-

In 1994, Egyptian exports to Jordan totaled \$45 million, while Jordanian exports to Egypt totaled roughly \$15 million for the same year.

Year five of plan

THE PEOPLE's Assembly will soon witness heated debates on Egypt's national socio-economic development plan which was discussed this week in the Shura Council. The plan deals with the fifth and final year of the five-year plan (1992-1997), and will focus mainly on the commodity sector.

According to the report on the plan, it aims at raising growth rates times times that of the population growth rate, covering the balance of payments deficit gap, privatising more public sector companies and launching a number of national do

This year, for the first time, the plan highlights privatisation measures as being a basic part of the government's reform policies. The report also said that more than 14 public sector companies, 32 hotels and a number of department stores willbe wholly put up for sale next year. In the mean-time, the sales of public sector shares in joint ventime banks will be stepped up.

The report also noted that efforts at privatisation

over the past 15 years have resulted in a 29 per cent increase in private investments from 1980/81/ to 1995/96. Over the next few years, the report added, the state's role will be confined to addressing infrastructural needs.

industrialists on Iraq visit

A DELEGATION from the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FOEI) is scheduled to leave for han indistries (POEI) is screenised to leave non-ling tomorrow, with the sum of studying the Iraqui population's basic needs with respect to food and pharmaceuticals. These products are exempted. from the UN embargo imposed on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"This is our way of expressing solidarity with the Iraqi people," said Mandouh Mekki, vice-president of the FOEL "They have been suffering due to a severe shortage of these essential prod-

The delegation will include representatives of companies producing pharmaceuticals, food, clothing and spare parts. Mekki said that the delegation will meet their Iraqi counterparts to evaluate the possibility of cooperation. The visit is also intended to show Iraqis how far Egyptian industry has come in the past few years. "Iraqi's isolation is bound to come to an end sooner or later, and when it does, there will be greater connectivities." when it does, there will be greater opportunities for both business and investment," he said.

The visit comes in response to an invitation by the Iraqi Federation of Industries and Chambers of Commerce. It is not, however, the first visit to Iraq by Egyptian businessmen. Members of the Egyptian Federation of Chambers of Commerce went to Iraq in mid-1994. A second visit came in-November 1995, when another delegation headed by Essam El-Khashab, a representative for the Arab Company for Foreign Trade, arrived in Iraq

Edited by Ghada Ragab

Great rush on housing shares

The sale of a 75 per cent stake in the equity of a state-owned housing company stole the spotlight on the stock exchange this week. Shereen Abdel-Razek reports

Representing the first case of near-total privatisation of a public sector company through the stock exchange, three million shares of the Medinat Nasr Housing and Development Company (MNHD) were put up for public subscription last week.

MNHD's perent company, the National Company for Construction and Urbanisation, bad initially put up for sale 400,000 shares of its subsidiary last Sunday. The offering included 10 per cent of the MNHD's capital and each share valued at LE65. However, within the first two hours of the first day of subscription, the offering was more than threetimes oversubscribed. The subscription period was scheduled to last three days.

To meet the demand, a high ministerial committee

cided to increase the share offering to three million, or 75 per cent of the company's total equity. According to the committee's decision, 10 per cent of the shares will be set aside for the company's Employee Shareholders Associatioo (ESA).

The higher-than-expected demand for the shares, said Taher El-Maghrabi, MNHD's chairman, came as a surprise. However, the rush, he added, was a result of the company's strong financial position. "MNHD posted a pre-tax net profit of LE66 million over a nine month period ending 31 March," stated El-Maghrabi. "In fiscal 1994/95, the company's pre-tax net profit was only LE36.5 million. The company, he noted, has increased the projected 1995/96 dividend from LE8.4 to LE9.

offering was well thought out and prepared," said El-Maghrabi. Before the shares were put up for public subscription. MNHD officials met with representatives of brokerage houses and investment funds to discuss the company's position and subscription procedures.

What makes this offering unique, he stated, was the diverse backgrounds of the subscribers. Brokerage houses received purchase orders from around 400 foreign investment funds, in addition to local and foreign businessmen, banks and small in-

As a result of this share offering, the company's ownership structure and logal status will change, the National Company for Construction and Urbanisation will retain 25 per cent of the shares, MNHD's ESA will acquire a 10 per cent stake and the rest will be held by individuals and financial institutions. MNHD, therefore, will be subject to the Companies Law 159 of 1981 instead of the Public Sector Law 203 of 1991.

Sherif Cararah of the Financial Brokerage Group, one of the companies which managed the issue, said that while the offering was warmly welcomed by the public in the first day, the decision to increase it to 75 per cent of the equity made the sale more appealing to both foreign and local investors.

"They rushed in to buy because the decision comes as a clear signal from the government that it is serious about privatisation," he said. On the second and third days of the offering, purchase orders

The shifting fortunes of Port Said

Once a flourishing model for Sadat's open door policy, Port Sald has fallen on hard times. Not for much

longer, Dina Ezzat finds out, as she tours the city, talks to local businessmen and the US ambassador

It is a bot summer morning in Port-Said, the harbour city straddling the northern tip of the Suez Canal. A group of peddlers are trying hard to attract customers; but having little luck. "There is nothing really interesting to buy," commented one shopper who used to come to this oorthern port on exclusive shopping tours. "The prices are no longer as cheap as they once were," he

Once a duty-free zone under the *Infitah* (open door) policy launched in the mid-1970s, Port Said was a popular commercial centre for the entire country. With commodities ranging from canned fruit cockrails to electric goods, the city attracted a mide strong of commercial the tracted a wide range of consumers who had been denied access to foreign prod-

However, over the last decade, a gradual natiouwide lifting of the ban on im-ports, coupled with the mass production of locally manufactured consumer goods, have pushed the city out of the shopping

Now, there are signs that the state of re-cession, from which Port-Said has suf-fered, may soon be reversed; the town is expected to get a new duty-free zone and an infusion of refreshing foreign in-

Last Tuesday, the American Express Bank opened a branch in Port Said. The city has a good foundation for investment, and this is why we are here," said Ahmed Dabbous, American Express's executive director and regional head of its Middle East operation. "In two years it [Port Said] will take off; it has the infrastructure, and the people here know the [business] system." he added.

A oumber of businessmen interviewed by Al-Ahram Weekly agreed that Dab-bous's estimate for the city's recovery is reasonable. Currently under construction is a large, new duty-free zone. This, according to Ibrahim Soudan, president of Soudnaco, an import-export firm based in Port Said, will probably give the kiss of life to trade between this northern harbour

and other Mediterranean trade ports.

According to Edward Walker, the US

the coming of this bank to town reflects renewed US investor interest in the city.

Walker has just returned from a twoweek, 10-state tour in the US where he highlighted the investment opportunities for interested US businesses. He predicted that more US investments are soon to come. In Walker's view, Egypt's commitment to economic reform has sparked US investor interest in the country as a future business opportunity. There is, he said, a shift from "polite interest" to "acute interest". He stated that potential US projects in Egypt will not be clustered in Cairo, but will go to other cities like Assiut, Alex-

andriz and Port Said. Initiating the expansion of US business in Port-Said are two major projects that will be financed primarily by American Express. The first is a \$25 million marina, and the other is an export-oriented plastic reducts factory.

Port Said's businessmen are expecting

ate wider trade opportunities for everyone in the region, and Port Said will certainly benefit from this," said Fathi Ayouti, a Port Said-based businessman.

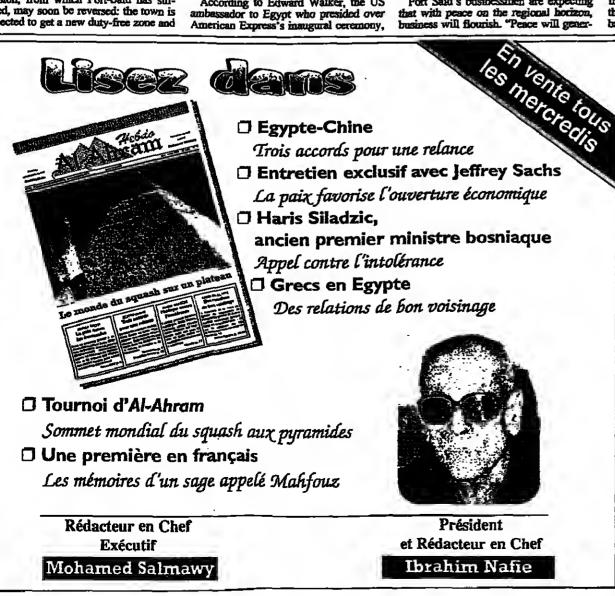
Over the last few years, an obvious presence of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Port-Said has at tested the waters and paved the way for US investments. Since the late 1980s, USAID has provided short-term loans for the import of, among other things, industrial materials, ag-ricultural products and frozen meat. It also funded small and unicro-projects through its links with local non-governmental or-

The cooperation between USAID and the Small Enterprise Development Association of Port Said (SEDAP) is but one example. With a US grant of LE4 million, SEDAP has disbursed 1,582 loans since the beginning of 1995. Ranging in size from LE500 to several thousand pounds, the loans, offered at 16 per cent interest, have been channelled into existing projects. In a meeting with the board of SE-DAP, Walker expressed the US's will-ingness to offer technical assistance for improving the quality of goods produced by micro-enterprises, thereby enabling them to compete on the international market.

Egypt is the second largest recipient of US aid after Israel. However, the current \$1.3 billion in military assistance and \$815 million in economic aid annually are expected to be reduced. Walker confirmed that this is not going to happen this year, and is unlikely even next year. But, he said, "The job of economic assistance to a country is to [eventually] run itself out of business" after helping the aid recipient realise economic development.

Additional US investments in Egypt are estimated at \$1.3 billion. Of these, 70 per cent are channelled into industry, with the oil business topping the list.

In an attempt to further trade links be-tween Egypt and the US, last year both states signed an agreement of economic partnership. The partnership aims at changing the nature of the economic ties between the two countries from a donor-recipient relationship to a one-to-one business relationship.



Market report

El-Temsah tops trading And, while the Suez Cement Company

GIVING an indication of a marginal recovery, the General Market Index, the capital market's leading bettometer,

when the fell

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led the market in terms of number of shares traded, its shares closed at their gained 0.96 points to close at 200.64 for the week ending 9 May.
Only 1.E64.31 million in opening price of LE41.90. The company . . traded . 152,660 22.46 per cent of the market's total 22.46 shares changed hands, also reflecting the week's light For the fitrading. nancial . sec-Among the bit tor, the pichardest ture were some little brighter. Its index Sector companies, with their loss close 206.34. in share value pushing down Egyptian Enthe sector's ingmeers Arab dex by 0.52 points 261.27. Company gained LE1 Shares of the per share to General Company for Paper Manufacturin close LE142 g (RAKTA), The service sector's index received

from LE25.8 to LE24.7, a 14.68 per cent decline in share value. Shares of the Alexandria Portland Cement Company, however, witnessed a LE24.99 increase to close at LE389.9 per share.

lost 0.83 close at 136.47. Shares of El-Texash Tourist Projects Company realised the most substantial gains on the market gaining LE74.40 to level off at LE310

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Al-Ahram: A Diwan of contemporary life

The National Bank, the Egyptian National Bank, and the Bank of the National Mint were the various names used by Al-Ahram in the spring and summer of 1898 to refer to the imminent formation of what would ultimately be called The National Bank of Egypt. Formed with Egyptian and European capital in that year, Egypt's first bank to issue bank notes is now approaching its first centennial.

Nearly one bundred years ago, news of the forth-coming bank was greeted with an element of cau-tion. On 26 May 1828, Al-Ahram writes, "According to the Egyptian Gazette, talks are currently in progress over the creation of a national bank. It appears that the talks will soon bear fruit; because the owners of major financial houses in London have agreed to participation in its formation. Although we are delighted at the prospects of more banks in our country, we are concerned that the new banks will be

British owned, yet be called 'national' banks."

The creation of Egypt's first national bank as the 19th century drew to a close marked the culmination of the radical transformation in Egypt's economie and financial system. The process began with the collapse of the Mameluke fendal system and the introduction of capitalism in the reign of Mohamed Ali (1805-48). It is to this period then that we must first turn to see the unfolding of the

story of banks and bankers in Egypt.
"Banking is the spirit of capitalism" goes the
well-known adage. Yet, las capitalism made its entry into the country under the umbrella of the state, it lacked this prerequisite spirit. This, perhaps, is what enabled Western (capitalism, with its established banking spirit, to secure its foothold in the Egyptian economy even before the end of the reign of Mohamed Ali.

Not that Mohamed Ali was oblivious to the need. In 1842 he attempted to inject an element of this spirit with the establishment of the Commercial Bank in Alexandria. According to a contemporary commentator, it was "like the banks of civilized kingdoms in that it would have the authority to set the price of the currency, to set the prices of various commercial and agricultural products subject to trade, to open credits and to arrange transfers." The experiment, however, was doomed to fail as long as the pasha retained full control over all-sectors of economie activity.

In spite of this initial failure, the idea of founding a national bank had taken hold. In a sense it was bound to do so. It was increasingly promoted by that group of Egyptians sent on educational missions to various European capitals, where they also assiduously recorded their impressions of the features of life there. Foremost among these was the illustrious Sheikh Rafaa Rafie:Al-Tahtawi, who commented, "The greatest commercial industry in Paris is the banking system, which is divided into two branches: the royal or government bank and the banks of Paris. In the government banks the people deposit the sums they wish and every year they take a certain profit as stipulated by their law. This profit is not considered usury as long as it does not exceed the amount stipulated in law. The same applies to the banks of Paris, where money is lent and borrowed at an interest. The profit on deposits there is higher than in the royal banks, although money deposited in the latter banks is said to be more secure

A Committee and their

than in the former." In addition, many foreigners began to found private banks in Egypt - Oppenheim, Levison and Co. and Landau and Co. In addition a number of Egyptianised Jews and Greeks founded several other banks and the "Bank of the National Mint" was

partially of their prog-eny. It was they who constituted the backbone of the new spirit of capitalism in Egypt. The Souares Brothers firm was a perfect example. Almost every major pro-

ject that was in the works in the last decade of the 19th century was associated with the name Sources. Cairo's former transport system is an example. Its demise came: with the introduction of the electric tramway in 1896. The Helwan railway, the Cairo sewer project, the narrowgauge agricultural rail-ways, the sala of govern-

ment property to the British all, to a greater or lesser extent, had the name Souares behind them. It is thus no surprise to find that the Souares Brothers were instrumental in forming the National Bank of Egypt, after they and a number of other prominent Egyptian capitalist families succeeded in con-solidating their ties with prominent banking houses

In spite of the initial reserve with which Al-Ahram greeted the National Bank, it could not deny its significance. As Al-Ahram's owner, Biehara Taqla, wrote on 12 January 1899, "Firstly it is a great bank. Secondly, it is a prelude to an agricultural bank, which we believe will bring the greatest and most widespread benefit to farmers in general and small farmers in particular.

One advantage of the latter bank, according to Taqla, would be that it would "force banks and large nercial houses to lower the interests on their loans in order to compete with the aforementioned bank." More importantly, an agricultural bank would support the country's primary industry: agriculture. 'It would grant loans to small farmers, which would give them the same advantages as large land owners and merchants dealing with the

Such was the potential for the proposed bank that Taqla pleaded. The rulers and all officials must lend their support to the new project or any bank that would fulfill this function. Indeed, the entire nation should support such projects so as to strengthen our national currency, spread prosperity and alleviate, through the generation of money, the burden of taxes."

It was thus with a spirit of hope, tainted with some caution, that Al-Ahram followed the establishment of the National Bank of Egypt. The official birth of the bank is marked by the khedival decree of 25 June 1898, although the bank did not actually open its doors until 5 September. The edict quelled the intense speculation that accompanied the ministerial meetings held during the three days prior to its promulgation. In addition to specifying the amount of capital, the number of shares and the system of subscription, the decree authorised the new bank to issue bank notes. The government would also be empowered to ratify the appointments of the bank's director and his deputies and to appoint two representatives who would be responsible for "monitoring the implementation of the laws and regulations of the bank and auditing the moneys and

The first Egyptian banknote went into circulation almost exactly 100 years ago. It was issued the

year after the National Bank of Egypt was founded by royal decree in 1898 to become the nation's first government financial institution. Because Britain was occupying Egypt, four of the new bank's 20 directors were Britons, including the chairman of the board. In this instalment of his reveiw of Egypt's contemporary history on the basis of reports published in Al-Ahram, Dr Yunan Labib Rizg tells how the bank was

established and the obstacles it had to surmount

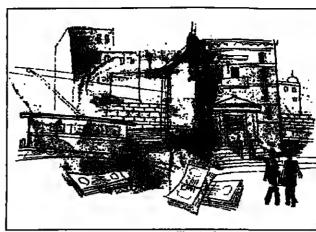


Illustration: Makram Henein

The first board of directors meeting was held on 5 July in the Cairo offices of the Souares Brothers. Sixteen of its twenty members were present. Those were the ones resident in Cairo. Three other members of the board were British. As for the election of the chairman, who was also British, it is a story we

Over the next two weeks, Al-Ahram published a series of advertisements put out by the board. One reads, "The National Bank is a company with a capital of one million pounds sterling, divided into 100,000 shares worth 10 sterling each, as stipulated in the decree of 25 June." A second advertisement announced the forthcoming sale of the shares and the method of payment: One pound ten shillings upon subscription for each share, then a second instalment of the same amount and finally the remainder "to be paid at specific times and upon conditions set by the board of directors of the bank and in accordance with the pertinent regulations".

Contemporary Al-Ahram readers were certain to note alongside the advertisements the newspaper's exhortation to the public: "We pray that citizens respond wholeheartedly to the subscription so as to make this bank 'national' in more than name only. All indications confirm the bopes people have for the success of this bank that enjoys the backing of the Egyptian government. We urge people wishing to subscribe in this venture do so quiekly and not to let the opportunity pass them by."

Al-Ahram had no cause for disappointment. The original 20,000 shares put on sale in Egypt were covered 33 times in a single day. "The price of the share has now reached 13 and 1/8 pounds!" Al-

Rejoicing further that subscriptions exceeded all spectations, Al-Ahram comments, "The Souares Brothers are delighted and see this as proof of the great success that is anticipated for the bank. This is the first time in this nation's history that the number of shares oo offer has been exceeded 33 times by demand." One dark note, bowever, was that the number of shares allotted to Egyptians was limited. We know of Egyptians who subscribed for 100 or 200 shares but were only given three or six."

The process of structuring the bank, which took up the remainder of the year, was the subject of item after item in the news. The first step, to select the chairman of the board of directors, provoked a small storm. Within three days of the promulgation of the khedival decree establishing the bank Al-Ahram writes: "We repeat to you a very strange ru-

mour that people have been floating. They say that Sir John Allen Palmer (the British financial advisor) is to be appointed director of the new National Bank

at a salary of 4,000 pounds." Two weeks later the rumour was confirmed with the appointment of Palmer as the director of the bank. "Everyone knows that every economic project that has been introduced in Egypt in recent years has been his brainchild. This includes the national bank where he has just ascended the throne," commented Al-Ahram. Nor could contemporary readers bave missed the sarcasm when it carped, "The bank will be under exemplary leadership in his bands, for be, more than anyone, is aware of the weaknesses of the Egyptian treasury and the advantages the bank can gain from the government and the people." Nor did it omit mention of the benefits in store for Sir Palmer himself: a salary of 5000 pounds, a home paid for by the bank and commissions on certain commercial activities. "All of this for a 10-year term. How fortunate some people are!"

The bank in Cairo opened its doors for business on 5 September. Working hours were "from nine in the morning until noon and from three to five in the afternooo and on Saturdays from nine in the morning until noon. It is closed on Sundays." Two weeks later. Sir Palmer presided at the inauguration of the Alexandria branch, The ceremonies "were attended by a large oumber of prominent merchants and bank ectors in the port city."

In the Ministry of Finance, the new British advisor, Sir Eldoo Gorst struck up, through the offices of Sir Palmer, a close working relationship between the government and the bank. This is supported by a ministry circular addressed "To all government departments", notifying them that the ministry "has opened a current account in the Egyptian National Bank. Henceforth, all sums to be disbursed to individuals and agencies by the Ministry of Finance shall be paid by cheques drawn on this bank."

The new system caused some alarm in Al-Ahram. "The Ministry of Finance will soon be able to dispense with all its tellers and money-counters, dismissing them one after the other as employees grow accustomed to drawing their salaries from the Na-

Otherwise, a series of reports indicate that Sir Palmer wasted no time in consolidating the position of the bank by establishing contact with other major banking firms. At the beginning of October, soon after the bank opened, Palmer undertook a European tour "to visit the major banks in Paris, London. Berlin and Brussels in order to establish relations between them and the National Bank."

However, the major task before the bank was issuing bank ootes in accordance with the provisions of the khedival decree. On 23 August Al-Ahram announced, "The bank will begin to issue paper cur-rency within six months. These will be in denominations of 100 piastres and five, ten and one hundred pounds." However, as obstacles began to rear their heads, it turned out that the task was not

The first obstacle was that the government had previously authorised the Ottoman Bank to issue bank notes. The National Bank protested and threatened to bring a case against the Ministry of Finance before the Mixed Court. However, shortly afterwards, Al-Ahram announced, "An accommodation has been reached with the Ottoman Bank regarding the licence to issue bank ootes." Subsequent editions of the newspaper revealed the nature of that accommodation. This, we learn, was the approval of the proposal put forward by Sir Palmer "to name Mr Reeves, one of the founders of the Ottoman Bank, as one of the two assistant directors Sir Palmer is entitled to appoint.

The second, and more important obstacle, pertained to the position of the Caisse de la Dette Pubtique (the National Debt Fund) in control of all the monetary reserves of the Egyptian government. The government could oot spend from its reserves unless it had the approval of all the member countries

on the Caisse. On 21 January 1899 the National Bank asked the Caisse to deposit in the bank "the mooeys and currencies that equal the value of the bank notes it will issue." The Caisse refused "unless the press that is to mint the currency is brought to Egypt and placed in the premises of the Caisse or the Ministry of Finance and only put into operation in the presence of representatives from the Caisse or the government." The fear of the Caisse was that it would have to collect its dues in the new paper currency of the bank rather than in gold currency as bad been the case un-

Negotiations between the two parties took up the better part of the following three months. In early March progress seemed hopeless. British occupation officials intervened for fear that the new bank would flounder if it did not issue bank notes. A solution was forthcoming and we read of it in Al-Ahram of 17 March 1899.

The Ministry of Finance has decided to accept the bank notes issued by the bank and m pay to the Caisse in gold the equivalent of the amounts it allocates to the provinces in paper mooey. This is in order to guarantee that the government has in its reserves the amount of money equal in value to the

currency issued." Within three weeks, oo 3 April to be precise, the National Bank of Egypt minted its first paper currency: a bundred-piastre note with two camels on it and a fifty piastre oote bearing pictures of the Sphinx and the Pyramids. The following day the bank transferred to the Ministry of Finance LE4,000 to be put in general circulation, marking the beginning of the history of the Egyptian bank oote which has almost completed its first centennial.

> The author is a professor of history and head of Al-Ahram History Studies Centre.

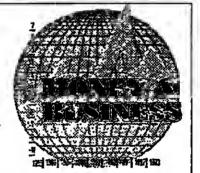


Enemies cooperate

SOUTH Korea announced that three companies have been given permission to pursue their investments in North Korea, which include Samsung Electronics, Daewoo Electronics and Talchang. -

Samsung will Invest \$7mn with a telecommunications firm in North Korea to set up a telecommunications centre in North Korea. Daewoo will Invest \$6.4mn in a project that produces electrical and electronic equipment. Taichang will invest \$5.3mn in a project to produce mineral water. Such cooperation is unusual in light of the relations between the two countries.





Portfolio management company established

THE STOCK Exchange Authority approved the establishmant of the International Company for Creation and Man agement of Stock Portfolios, with licenced capital of LE10mn, issued capital of LE6mn and paid-up capital of LE3mn.

Hussein Shukri, chairman of the board, said that the company's activities will focus on portfolio management and selling securities. He said that the company's establishment comes at a time when the stock market is experiencing a major resurgence, In light of the efforts to implement the country's privitisation programme.

Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt Health care policy

To support the government's health care polity, Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt embarks on a strategy geared towards providing financing for companies operating in this field. providing the production lines and capital repuired for setting up medicine factories and hospitals. The amount of financing provided by the bank totalled LE 1,6 billion of which the bank holds shares worth L.E. 22 million.

Сотрапу	Location	
Medicine Production: ■ Farco ■ Farcoby ■ Tenth of Ramadan for medicine industry	Ameria - Alexandria Industrial Zone - Borg El Arab Industrial Zone-6th Oct.	
Health care: • Misr International Hospital • Cairo specialized Hospital • Mansoura Medical Centre	Dokki - Giza Roxi - Cairo Mansoura	

These companies meet the local markets demands at moderate prices and export their products manufactured by using the latest

Boosting Saudi-Egyptian ties PREPARATIONS in Egypt and the two countries. private sector representatives of

Saudi Arabia are currently under- Tha Egyptian ambassador to Riway to boost cooperation between thw two countries in e variety of fields es Cairo prepares to host the Egyptian-Saudi Higher Cooperative Council, headed by Egyptien Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud Faisal. The meeting, which will take place during the forthcoming month, will deal with a number of topics reflecting the

yadh, Mohamed Kamal Amr, stated that it is expected that the volume of Seudi investments in Egypt will increase with regards to the private sector, especially in areas where Saudi Arabia is able to tiring its technical know-how into use, with emphesis on land reclemation projects, including agricultural and imigation equipment. The past period witnessed the

depth of the relationship between convening of a meeting among

the two countries, in which a number of Egyptians expressed an interest in investing In Seudi Aratile. This is a phenomena which will widen and increase the economic relationship.

The council will seek to increase commercial exchange try exempting some goods from duty.

The Egyptian ambassador said that the committee will elso examine problems feced by Egyptian workers in Seudi Arabia. Likewise, increasing Saudi tourism to Egypt will also be a topic of discussion. The ambassador said that Egypt is preparing es many eirolene seats as it can in preparation for the summer tourist sea-

Finally, the committee will explore means of increasing cultural exchanges between the two countries in the forthcoming period, including painting and theatre, as well as exchange trips between youth and scientific organisations.

Top speakers confirmed for IAA 35th World Advertising Congress

LEADING figures in glottel merketing communications will address the International Advertising Association's (IAA) 35th World Congress, "Visions: Communicating with Consumers in a Multimedia World", June 9-12 1996 at the Korea Exhibition Center in Seoul, Koree. The event will focus on three major ereas with a full day devoted to each.

The IAA's global network comprises more than 3600 members in 89 countries worldwide. It has also NGO consultative status with UNESCO and other UN agancies.

As is the practice that the host country of the succeeding IAA Congress hold a gala night to welcoma and invite attendees to the coming congress, Egypt, host of the IAA 1998 Congress, will hold a gala night with an Egyptian oriental character under the nama "Egyptian Night" on the congress' last day.

New companies established

THE COMPANIES Committee at the Ministry of Economy, headed try Ahmed Fouad Atta, first under-secretary at the Ministry of Economy, approved the establishment of 17 companies, 10 of which are joint stock ventures whose total capital amounts to LE837.500mn. Seven of these compenies are with limited liebilities, the capital of which amounts to LE451,000. Eight compenies are headquartered in Cairo, six in Giza, two in 6th of October City end 10 in 10th of Ramadan City.

Four companies operate in commerce, three in contracting, four in services and one company in the field of tourism.

Insurance conference held

Kingdom of Jordan, Inaugurated the 21st annual meeting of tha General Arab Insurance Federation at the Royal Conference Halls in Amman, hald this past week from 14-16 May 1996, under the supervision of the Jor- Company, and the vice-president danian Insurance Companies of the Egyptian Insurance Super-

Federation. Kheiry Salim, vice-president of tha Egyptian Insurance Super- delegations from Palestinian invisory Organisation, said ovar surance companies. 190 mambers of the federation,

cluding en Egyptian delegation of surance. heads of all Egyptian insurance companies, tha head of tha Egyptian Insurance and Re-Insurance visory Organisation. Attending the conference for the first time were

The conference held a number mada up of representatives of in- of technical workshops and sub-

KING Hussein of the Hashemite surance and re-insurance com- committees, dealing with a variety panies from all over the Arab of topics including: life, autoworld attended the conference, in- mobile, office, airline and sea In-

The Ganarai Arab Insurance Faderation was founded in Cairo in 1964, with the aim of promoting ties and strongar relations among Arab insurance companias and organisations, The general meeting of the federation is hald once every two years in one of the nations of the fedaration's membership. The Cairo meeting was held in 1990.

Business news

Developing Africa

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Boutros Gheli opened e meeting for heeds of UN agencies that took place in Nairotii. The meeting is aimed at finding means of enhancing development in the African continent.

Ghali stated that his visit coincides with the international plan announced by the IMF and the World Bank to implement a tenyear development plan in Africa which will focus on enhancing managarial skills, education. health care, food and water supplies in the continent inhabited by over 700 million people.

Industry minister meets with the industries federation

SULEIMAN Rida, minister of industry, held a meeting this past week with members of the board of the Egyptian Industries Faderation, focusing on the problems currently facing Egyptian industry and tha role of tha federation in solving these problems. The meeting also discussed tha prospects for the federation's cooperation with other ministries and organisations during tha forth-

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Hariri's charm offensive



As Israeli shells and bombs descended on Lebanon, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri looked for intrepid investors in Europe. Gamal Nkrumah, reporting from Brussels, spoke to the Lebanese prime minister

One has to admire the sheer tenacity and business acumen of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. He and a handful of political hangers-on, mostly fellow Lebanese businessmen trooped into a small room in the Royal Crown Grand Hotel Mercure in the beart of the Belgian capital on Tuesday to speak with a few Brussels-based Arab journalists. Hariri, with a massive stake in Lebanoo's reconstruction, came to Brussels to meet the foreign ministers of the European Union's 15 member states who happened to be meeting in Brussels. Hariri had a difficult task, oot least because of the European ministers' inability to act as ooe in key areas of foreign policy not least in the Middle East.

Hariri, who flew into Brussels from Rome, downplayed Susanna Agnelli's strongly-worded criticism of French efforts to influence the course of events in the Middle East. The outgoing Italian foreign minister, whose tenure of the EU's rotating presidency highlighted the growing rift among European powers' external policies, praised the perseverance of the Lebanese premier and the courage of the Lebanese people. But, she reiterated that France had no business going it alone in Lebanon. Many Europeans feel that the diplomacy that would ensure peace in Lebanon would have to be American not European.

For his part, an unperturbed Hariri paid tribute to France's readiness to belp. Hariri praised the visioo of French President Jacques Chirac and welcomed the sbuttle diplomacy of France's Foreign Minister Herve de Charette.

Israel's 1993 severe bombardment of Lebanoo was stopped by the Americans — oot the Europeans. As embarrassing as it may be, both Hariri and his European hosts were acutely aware of the fact that Washington, and oot Brussels, counts the most when it comes to Middle Eastern affairs. In fact, Europe, or shall we say, Paris, is desperately trying to restore the rules of the engagement prescribed by the American Secretary of State Warreo Christopher in July 1993 in an understanding that until recently secured relative peace.

Today, the Americans want a far tougher stand on Hezbullah and are tightening the screws oo the Shi a Muslim political of ganisation that controls eight of the 128 seats in the Lebanese Parliament, Paris, like Hariri and unlike Washington, does not want a revisioo of Christopher's 1993 rules of engagement. Brussels is oot quite sure what it wants. European policy towards Lebanon is oot as united as Hariri had hoped.

Emerging from a meeting with British Foreign Secretary Michael Rifkid, Hariri played down the fact that British Defence Minister Michael Portillo just happened to be in Israel at the height of Israel's ferocious bombardment of Lebanon last month. The British and the Italians have been the most vociferous in condemning French moves in Lebanon. They also have been the most sensitive to criticisms of America, However, even Londoo and Rome have expressed outrage at the Isruch shelling of Lebanon.

Hariri told Al-Ahram Weekly that the "relentless Israeli bombardment [of his country] was terrorising the Lebanese public opinioo into an anti-peace mood. But we still bope for a just peace settlement. Israeli troops must withdraw uncooditionally and unequivocally from every incb of Lebanese territory be-fore peace can be concluded. Only when the Israeli troops withdraw from Lebanon can peace he realised. The entire Lebanese nation - Christiao, Muslim and Druze - are united as

He stressed: "Israeli terror tactics have failed to cow the Lebanese into submission." Hariri emphasised that the various confessional communities are determined to pursue the reconstruction of Lebanoo.

"Interrupting the Lebanese reconstruction process has been one of the objectives of the Israeli bombardment," be ooted. Israel failed to frighten away investors. Israel failed to destroy the Lebanese national unity. Israel's image abroad has been irreparably damaged," be said.

Hariri made oo bones about the faet that the destruction of Lebanese infrastructure was considerable. He disclosed that his government was studying proposals for compensation for the physical damage to property and the loss of lives. "The Israelis must not get away with their beinous acts of terror." be

Hariri dismissed suggestions that the ruling Israeli Labour Party was better to deal with than the opposition Likud. "They are all the same," he said. It is for that reason that he was asking European leaders to play a moderating role. The most important task at hand is the reconstruction of his war-torn country, be stressed. But Hariri did oot come to Brussels with a hig begging bowl, he made elear. He was looking for investors who had faith in Lebanon's future, he said.

If Hariri's recovery plans succeed in attracting European capital, there will be real scope for reconstructing Lebanoo, Hariri stressed. But, as observers in Europe point out, there will still be much to do to ensure that the right balance between the natural Lebanese entrepreceurial flair and proper business regulations — more in line with European ways of doing business — is realised.

Hariri said that Lebanon's reconstruction will cost something in the area of \$1 hillioo annually. At a press conference in Brussels, be spelled out his country's reconstruction requirements. His sums include \$270 million annually for infrastructural development and repair, electricity generation and transport and telecommunication upgrading. Education, health and social welfare services will cost about \$216 million per year, he said, and water, sewage and waste disposal projects will require \$324 million per annum. A further \$150 million a year will go into agricultural and industrial development, Ha-

Hariri did not expect European private interests to foot the entire bill for Lebanon's reconstructioo. "I do not want our European friends to bear the brunt of these costs. I shall endeavour to win the support and financial backing of the greatest oumber of states, financial institutions and businessmen in Europe. North America, the Far East and the Arab world," be said. Hariri left Brussels for what was described by his press aides as "a short private visit to Paris." From Paris, Hariri flew to Abu Dhabi in yet another fund-raising tour that, like his European swing, promises to be anything but ceremonial.

Three-way summit draws joint strategy

In a concerted show of support for the Palestinians in their final status talks with Israel, a three-way summit was held in Cairo this week to coordinate the Arab stand. Nevine Khalii reports

In a long-awaited three-way Arab summit between Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, the leaders of the three nations coordinated a joint strategy for the next round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. President Hosni Mubarak, with Jordan's King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, reached a unified stand on the future of Jerusalem, which promises to be the most difficult issue to resolve in the final status talks with Israel. The purpose of the summit was to "reinforce

the Palestinian position and the [principles of the] peace process during the final status negotiations", Egyptian officials said.

In a joint statement, the three leaders said that peace must be based on the respect of the legal, historical and spiritual rights of Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem." Otherwise, any declaration of peace "would remain only bollow words". Jerusalem, the statement nued, was at the heart of the overall Arab-Israeli peace process.

Jerusalem is oot only a sticking point between

the Palestinians and Israel. It has also been an issue of cootroversy between Jordan and the Palestinians, who in the past have disagreed on rights over Jerusalem's boly sites, especially af-ter Israel recognised Amman's "historical role" in the holy city in its peace agreement with Jor-

In reaction, Arafat insisted that East Jerusalem's future was for the Palestnians to decide, and urged Amman to pledge to surrender its elaim oo the holy sites to the Palestinians after their final settlement with Israel.

But any disagreement seems to have been re-solved, and King Hussein told reporters: "Jerusalem is Arab and, God willing, our Palestinian brothers will be able to regain it as a symbol of peace." He described the Palestinian-Jordanian relationship as "sacred" and said he would be "overjoyed" if the boly sites in Jerusalem were in the hands of President Arafat or

The one-day summit also resulted in the formation of a "permanent coordination mechanism" at the ministerial level, which will coordinate stands for the final status negotiations. "It is concerned with the Palestinian track of the peace process and coordinatioo between the three Arab states," Foreign Minister Amr Mous-



sa told Al-Ahram Weekly. In addition to the future of Jerusalem, items on the agenda of the final status negotiations include borders, refugees, Jewish settlements and the legal status of the territories. The ministerial mechanism will discuss

the same topics. Final status negotiations, which began in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba on 5 May, are expected to resume after the 29 May general elections in Israel. The leaders said their ministers would remain in constant contact, and that other Arab parties with an interest would be welcome to participate in their dialogue.

Egypt has been pushing for this summit since February because of the effect of the final status talks on the region as a whole. In his opening statements at a joint press conference, Mubarak said that it was expected that problems would arise during the peace process, "but through con-tinual cooperation and coordination, the obstacles can be overcome." He said that the final solution to the Palestinian question lay in the Jordanian territory to be used for any action the cause is just."

hands of the Palestinians themselves, and that "we are assisting [them] to achieve a just solu-

Arafat said that although many difficulties lay ahead, "with this blessed meeting, we have laid the groundwork to resolve these difficulties in a way which will fulfill the hopes and expectations of our Arab nation."

In an overt demonstration that Palestinian-Jordanian relations were not strained, Arafat praised both Jordan's and Egypt's support, saying that the two nations had "spared no effort" in backing the Palestinians. The Palestinian president denied that he had last month accused Jordan of sheltering the Hamas leaders, who were behind attacks against himself and Israel. Arafat said that be did not "suspect" Jordan of belping Hamas, but that "certain forces in Hamas who are in Jordan have published statements against us. That's all.'

against "Palestine, the PLO or our brother Yasser Arafat'. The PLO, he continued, was the "sole legitimiate representative" of the Palestinians. "Any transgression in this area is frankly [crossing] a red line and we will stop it

by every means possible. It was also reported that Jordan's and Egypt's intelligence chiefs, and the chief of security in autonomous Gaza, had met on the sidelines of the summit to coordinate their crackdown on Ha-

The three leaders will meet again in Jordan in the first week of June, soon after the Israeli elections show who the Palestinians' negotiating partner during the long and complicated final status falks will be.

Asked about the impact of the Israeli elections on the peace process, Mubarak said that the elections were a matter for the Israeli people. "We will deal with whoever the Israeli people choose, whether Labour or Likud, because

The Arab factor in the Israeli poll

with in the country's forthcoming May general elections, writes Graham Usher from Jerusalem

Despite being deprived of civil equality and national rights, Israel's Palestinians are a force to reckon Palestinian peace process has oot only altered the political reality of Palestinians who reside in the West Bank and Gaza. It has had an equally profound impact on the 850,000 Palestinians who live inside Israel as "non-Jewish" citizens of a Jewish state. One effect of the emerging political power of this constituency (representing around 12 per cent of the Israe-

The fact of an Israeli/

li electorate) is predicted by Palestinian Member of Knesset (MK) and leader of Israel's Hadash Party, Hashim Mavote," be says, "Shimoo Peres cannot be elected prime min-

The Palestinian citizens of

Israel (or Israeli Arabs) are the descendants of the 120,000 Palestinians who staved oo the land in 1948 after 750,000 of their compatriots fled or were driven out during the war that gave birth to the Israeli state. bject to martial law between 1948 and 1966, Israel's Palestinians have been discriminated against in all spheres of Israeli society, most brutally in the areas of land ownership and municipal re-sources. Since the lifting of martial law, Israel's Palestinians have mobilised around the dual aims of eivie equality and national rights and are represented in the Knesset by two main political parties — the Arab Democratic Party (DAP) led by former Labour Party MK Abdul-Wahab

Darawshe which has two seats

and Hadasb which has four But political apathy fed by discrimination has been oorm among Israel's Palestinians. In every Knesset election since 1966, only around 68 per cent turned out to vote (considerably less than the Jewish turn out), with, in 1992 elections, 47. per cent voting for Zionist parties rather than Arab lists (like the DAP) or Arab/Jewish lists (like Hadash). The historic beneficiary of this arrangement was Israel's Labour Party, who gained Arabs' support without

having to do much to keep it. With Israel's 14th Knesset elections due on 29 May, this could change. The influence Israel's Palestinian lobby are expected to have over the peace process is one factor. But there are also internal factors that presage greater Arab repre-sentation in Knesset. This may (as in the past) belp Shimon Peres' ruling Labour coalition, but such "help" should not be taken for granted.
In March, Israel's Islamist

movement decided for the first time to contest the Knesset elections, "not as an independent party", says Islamist movement spokesperson. Ibrahim Sarsour, "but as an independent force within an Arab list" aligned with the DAP. The Islamists are a considerable force among Israeli Ar-

councils in Israel. Historically they had opposed participation in the Knesset largely over the ideological difficulty of swearing allegiance to the Jewish state. But the PLO's 1993 peace agreement with Israel followed by Israel's 1994 Peace treaty with Jordan has weakened the hard-liners in the movement. Should the Islamists be able to translate the to the national arena, then Palestinian turn-out in the Knesset vote will rise to around 75 per

A like development obtains with Hadash. For the last four years Israel's ex-communists (along with the DAP) have supported the Rabin and Peres governments "from the outside", largely because of the peace process. But, unlike the leftist Žionist bloc Meretz, neither had a formal coalition with Labour oor held any ministerial posts. This has enabled both Hadash and the DAP to oppose Labour when occ-

In May 1995, the six Hadash/ DAP MKs threatened to no confidence the Rabin government should it proceed with its plans to expropriate 139 acres of Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem. In the hope of bringing down the govern-ment, the rightist Likud op-

Rabin retreated, "freezing" the expropriations until further octice. In recent weeks, too, it has been Hadash (and not Meretz or the Jewish dominated .Peace Now movement) that has led the domestic opposition to Israel's assault on Lebanon, mounting sizable anti-war demonstrations in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Nazareth.

Both interventions have ennot only among Arabs. "I think we will double our Jewish vote in these elections," says Mahamid. "Many Jews now see us as the only left force in Israeli politics, the only left that fights". This could prove accurate. Damaged by its alliance with Labour in government, many analysts predict that Meretz's representation in the elections will fall from 12 seats to six or seven. Most of this support will swing behind Peres, but a sizeable minority will be picked up by Hadash.

Combined with the Islamists decision to run, such factors are likely to increase Arab mandates in Knesset from six to seven and possibly eight. Add to them the four Arab candidates running with the La-bour Party (all of whom are expected to win) and the Palestinian bloc in the 121 member Knesset is formidable, and one Peres will have to take into account. But, warn both Mahamid and Sarsour, "we are not in his pocket".
On 6 May, Mahamid met with cabinet minister Yossi

Beilin, to .discuss . Hadasb's stance vis-à-vis advocating support for Peres in the prime nisterial race against Likod's Binyamin Netanyabu. The meeting took place in the aftermath of Israel's massacre of 107 Lebanese refugees in a se oo 18 April as well as during the Peres government's now ten-week old closure of the occupied territories. Under such circumstances, Mahamid told Beilin, "we cannot ask our people to vote for Peres. Given the current mood (against Peres) among Israeli Arabs, they would ignore us anyway". To gain Hadash's support,

Peres must lift the closure and. redeploy the Israeli army from Hebron, says Mahamid. But more than this Peres "must convince us that there is a real difference between a government led by him and one led by Netanyahu." Such a difference is unlikely to be forthcoming Israeli government officials have strongly implied that nei-ther the closure nor the situatioo in Hebron will change much before the elections.

The Islamist/DAP bloc is similarly combative, though for different reasons. "We are attaching no conditions about the peace process to our support for Peres," says Sarsour, since Hebron and the closure are issues to be negotiated between Israel and the PLO". For the Islamists/DAP, a vote for Peres hinges on domestic mat-. ters, specifically equality in treatment and the return of Islamic Trust institutions and lands confiscated by Israel in

But the overall aim is a commitment from Peres and Labour that Israeli Arabs become recognised as an integral part of Israel's legislative system and civic society. "Till today", Israel is that it is a state for Jews. And what we seek are articles guaranteeing our presence as a legal national minority in Israel". Constitutionally, this would mean Israel changing its definition from a Jewish state to "a state for Jews and all its inhabitants". Hadash go further. Their ultimate objective, says Mahamid, is the transformation of Israel into "a state for all its citizens", Jewish and Arab alike.

That such issues can be raised and will play a part in the upcoming Israeli elections attests to the political transformations "peace" and the prospect of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza has wrought for Israel's Pal-estinians. It is a welcome development, says Mahamid. "It has created an internal balance in us. In the future we will act as a bridge between our state, Israel, and the state of our people_Palestme"

TURKEY'S Water card is Turkey selling Syria and Iraq down the river of economic and political gain, wonders Khaled El-Sergani

subject to international law. According to Tur-The scarcity of water resources in the Middle East is a time bomb waiting to explode if left key, an agreement with Syria is already in place, whereby the latter receives 500 cubic meunattended. Water disputes have loog been recognised as a destabilising factor in the peace process. The Middle East peace process worktres of water per second. But Syria considers the 1987 agreement a temporary arrangement pendmg group oo water resources — one of five working groups established after the 1991 Ma-

agement in the region.

The water conflict is not restricted to Israel and the Arabs. Turkish-Arab relations have been adversely affected by the water issue which, in turn, is inextricably linked to security. Turkey has previously accused Syria, and now Iraq, of assisting and supporting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and has used water as a

drid Conference — scheduled a plenary meeting

in Tunisia yesterday to improve water man-

political bargaining counter.

Countries with rivers that originate outside their borders, like Syria and Iraq, are particularly vulnerable, especially since water supplies are expected to decrease. These countries are threatened by water management policies adopted by countries from where the rivers flow, such as Turkey, which has almost full control

over the Tigris and the Euphrates. Approximately 88 per cent of these two rivers' waters spring from Turkish territory and the rest flows from Syria. Spanning 2,726 km, the Euphrates flows for 900 km in Turkish territories, over 1,000 km in Syria and more than

So far, Turkey has been reluctant to sign any agreement concerning the distribution of the Eubrates waters with its riparian neighbours. Turkey has argued that the Euphrates waters that travel within its territories constitute Turkish Moreover, Turkey is unwilling to conclude a metres of water per day to Syria, Jordan, Saudi the most seriou natural wealth and that its distribution is not new water agreement with Syria, presumably Arabia and possibly Israel, at a later stage. The relations.

ing a comprehensive settlemeor between Tur-key, Syria and Iraq. The settlement Syria seeks would enable each of the three countries to receive a quota of 666 cubic metres of water per second. This would increase Syria's share to 9.3 billion cubic metres and Iraq's to 12.8 cubic metres per year.

In that case, neither Syris nor Iraq would suf-fer from a scarcity in water supplies for a long time. Iraq's estimated population of 18.5 million consumes about 8.6 billion cubic metres of the Euphrates water. Its population is expected to reach 24 million by the year 2000 and its water needs are expected to reach 10 billion cubic metres, at the very least. Syria's population of 13.7 million, which consumes 4.4 billion cubic metres of water per year, is expected to reach 18 millioo by the turn of the century. Its water needs will thus increase to 13 billioo cubic metres by the year 2000, according to Syrian sta-tistics. Since the Euphrates provides Syria with an average of 80 to 87 per cent of its water needs, Syria will be unable to address the gap between its levels of water production and consumption unless it increases its share of the riv-

So far, Turkey has refused to engage in talks unless the negotiations include arrangements for the distribution of the Tigris waters - an issue of mutual concern to Turkey and Iraq, but not to Syria through which the Tigris does not flow. Moreover, Turkey is unwilling to conclude a

Another thorny issue is Turkey's dam construction policies which present a danger to Syrian and Iraqi security and may diminish the water supply to those countries.
Turkey's South East Anatolia (GAP) scheme

— requiring the construction of 21 dams and 17 power stations on the Tigris and Euphrates was undertaken to belp improve the level of income in the area by directing labour there. Rather than a single project, it is a comprehensive scheme composed of 13 irrigation and energy-generating projects. GAP involves six provinces oeighbouring Syria to the south of Turkey, covering 9.5 per cent of Turkish territory and home to 8.5 percent of its population.

GAP's implementation requires the strict control of the volume of water flowing into Syria and Iraq. During the construction of the Ataturk Dam, Turkey cut the water supply to Syria and Iraq for about one month in 1990, a procedure to be expected at every stage in the imple-

mentation of GAP. The prospect of economie gains and a more prominent political role in the region is another factor driving Turkey to capitalise oo its abundance of potable water. Turkey is looking into a "peace pipelines" project. Around 10,000 million cubic metres of water from two Turkish rivers, the Ceyhan and the Seyhan, are usually wasted as they run into the Mediterranean after Turkey gets its requirements. Under this proposed project, water would be discharged through two pipelines running from the two rivers. One would pump some 3.5 million cubic

until the Syrian stance vis-a-vis the PKK chang- second pipeline, known as the "gulf line". would pump 2.5 million cubic metres of water per day to Iraq, Kuwait, the eastern region of ; Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

According to feasibility studies conducted by an American firm, the "peace pipelines" project would be cost effective. Turkey hopes to realise a two billion dollar revenue from its sale of water to the Arab countries, payable in cash, or in return for crude oil and natural gas at preferential prices. Turkey further hopes that such cooperation would attract Arab loans and investments in Turkey's projects and pave the way for Turkish entrepreneurs to obtain a share in construction and building activities in the

However, Arab countries see things differently. They fear becoming more dependent than ever on Turkey for their water supply and hesitate to give Turkey such a weapon.
Second, the Arab countries situated at the end

of the water pipeline, like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, fear becoming subject to pressure by other Arab countries situated earlier along the

Third, there is concern that the water pipelines of might become targets of military operations and sabotage, which would gravely hamper the supply of water to these countries, possibly for long ... stretches of time. .

The fourth and perhaps most serious cause of concern is Arab countries' lack of confidence in Turkey's water policy. Their doubts are based. on the experiences of Syria and Iraq. Some Arab sources say that Turkey's water policy is the most serious obstacle to sound Arab-Turkish



Ex-apartheid party bolts

On 9 May the National Party (NP), which brought apartheid to South Africa, withdrew from its coalition with the African thew from its coalition with the African National Congress (ANC) in President Nelson Mandela's Government of National Unity The party's decision to pull out came one day after the country's first all-race parliament passed the new constitution by a sweeping majority vote.

Objecting to a constitutional clause Which allows a winning party in elections to form a government without the interim constitution's power-sharing requirement. NP leader Frederik Vide Klerk explained: "The NP has felt for some time now that

The NP has felt for some time now that our influence within the Government of Marional Unity has been declining. The ANC is acting more and more as if they no longer need multi-party government. The Pan-Africanist Congress, on the other hand, rejoiced at the withdrawal, asking the ANC to "rule and legislate in the interests of the dispossessed majority, un-cacumbered by the kinder compromises it and to make in the past."

Beyond the controversy surrounding the new constitution, it is evident that the NP pull-out will not affect the future course of South Africa's economy. Commenting on the issue, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said that the country's economic pro-gramme was not limited to NP policies, but also reflected ANC positions dating back to 1992. "Clearly there will be no fundamental change in economic policy,

De Kierk said that the market would remain stable despite his party's withdrawal. The prominent and widely tead Business Day shelved the constitution debate, hinting that market considerations were more imperative. "With the constitutional issues now resolved, the focus must turn to effective governance, particularly in the economic sphere. That is South Africa's real crisis," read the paper's editorial.

Yet facing the business of "effective governance" will be problematic for Mandela. In this wealthy country — one of the world's leading producers of diamonds, gold, magnesium and uranium — the black majority is still massively underdeveloped. In a country of 37.7 million, they represent 95 per cent of the 18 million people living below the poverty line. Sixty per cent of blacks survive in conditions of absolute poverty. While blacks make up 64 per cent of the working population, only 15 per cent of them hold professional, semi-professional or technical

eli po

Housing remains a major problem. The hulging shanty towns of Crossroad in Cape Town and Soweto and Alexandra in Johannesbarg and, worse, the huge and squalid squatter settlements of Khayelitsha at the Cape or Umgababa Inanda-Congo in Durban attest to the crisis. According to South African Development Bank estimates, 40 per cent of the urban popula-

Despite the withdrawal of the National Party from the South African government, the ANC remains largely handtied in dealing with the country's major probiem --- that of alleviating the black majority's poverty, writes Faiza Rady



on Mandela, jubilant after parliament approved South Africa's new constitutio

tion of 22 million have substandard sanitation services - while squatter communities receive no services at all.

Moreover, in the rural areas only 53 per cent of the 16 million people who live there have access to potable water, while 65 per cent are deprived of electricity. For instance, 19,000 — or 86 per cent — of the schools serving rural black com-munities and 17,000 of the health centres in the same areas have no electricity. The 1991 Urban Foundation Report stated that 11 million rural people lived under the poverty line — many in households head-ed by single women. In the 1980s infant mortality rates reached 204 per thousand in rural Grahamstown, compared with 27

per thousand in Johannesburg. Another serious problem concerns water distribution. South Africa, with its vast desert and mountain regions, is a semi-arid country where two-thirds of the land gets only 11 per cent of the rain water. In addi-

tion, water management projects, such as dams, and the hydraulic infrastructure were built to accommodate the needs of white housing settlements and agrarian production. Consequently, 60,000 whites bold 87 per cent of the cultivated land and produce 90 per cent of the output.

Although the constitution addresses the agrarian reform question, the planned land confiscation and equitable redistribution projects are problematic - to say the least, So far, white farmers have consistently resisted land confiscation attempts and blacks often lack the property deeds prov-

ing original ownership.

Given the appalling conditions facing the majority of South African blacks, many political analysts believed that Nelson Mandela would reform the ecocomy when he assumed power in 1994. In effect, the ANC loosely based its economic programme on the principles of the Charter of Liberty — a text coming out of the People's Congress, the impressive democratic coalitioo which united the progressive South African political and grassroots movements in 1955. "The natural wealth of our country... will be restituted to its people; mineral wealth, banks and industrial monopolies will become the property of all people; trade and industries will be controlled... and the land will be shared between those who cultivate it so that famine and thirst will be banished from the land," proclaimed the charter.

According to these principles, the ANC was to embark on a vast agrarian and industrial nationalisation plan. Yet its bands have been tied. Foreseeing the inevitability of majority rule in South Africa, the ruling class of the apartheid era had prepared their exit from the political scene by severing the economic system's ties with the

executive power.

The white elite had carefully laid out their plans well ahead of time. Although

South Africa traditionally projected the image of economic oco-liberalism, the economy had strong features of state cap-italism. Until the early 1980s, the key in-dustries were state-owned, while private enterprise and the markets were subjected to rigorous government regulations and controls. Moreover, the state protected the manufacturing industry affiliated to the mining and energy sectors. At the time, the ANC believed that access to political power would also guarantee them control

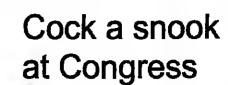
But the ruling class moved swiftly. At the beginning they transferred large amounts of capital abroad to evade the threat of potential nationalisation or fiscal constraints like progressive taxation of the rich. According to the Central Bank estimates, capital flight reached \$50 billion between 1970 and 1988. Yet this was not sufficient for South African multinationals like Anglo-American and Rembrandt. Fearing the possibility of capital freezes abroad, they camouflaged their boldings by creating European ventures - nominally dissociated from any visible South African affiliation.

While private capital went into hiding, the political elite restructured the system to prevent future governments from affecting economic policies. Economic growth had largely been dependent on massive government investment in public sector enterprises like the electrical company ESKOM or the chemical plant SAS-OL. To protect these industries from direct ANC interference, the NP initiated their privatisation. Hence state control over these enterprises was effectively minimised. In addition, the NP revamped government departments, making them into agencies and so giving them greater auton-

omy.

However, the NP's most important accomplishment was to restrict state control over fiscal and monetary policies by institutionalising the Central Bank's independence from the political establishment. Accordingly, the bank was given the leeway to choose its own director and board members, whereas such posts had been filled by presidential appointment under apartheid. Hence, the bank acquired considerable autonomy in fiscal and monetary decision-making — which de-termines the country's exchange and credit policies. This move further undermined what was left of the government's capacity

to reform the economy. Notwithstanding the real achievement of enshrining self-determination for all people in South Africa's oew constitution, the ANC's capacity to change the continuing economic oppression of the black majority remains largely shackled. In the words of political analyst Martin Woollacott: "The ANC will soon squarely face their legacy of vast social dysfunction, grotesque under-education and armed anger."



What did India's Congress Party do wrong, wonders Gamai Nkrumah

Among all that startles, amuses and delights in modern India is the tenacity of the Congress Party. Although the In-dian electorate did not vote the party back into office in the general elections held over the last month, voters did oot cock as hig a snook at Congress as many had predicted. Still, the Congress Party could not get away with prom-ising the people all the advantages of economic deregulation with none of the

Scandals involving bribery, extortion, embezzlement of public funds and corruption all counted against Congress politicians in the ballot. Another problem was that candidates from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) managed to exploit the deep frustration of the traditionally economically and socially deprived lower castes of the Hindu social structure and get away with preaching intolerance. Nevertheless, the real result is not so much that Congress lost, but that the poll re-sulted in the BJP falling over 100 seats short of the 272 required to form the new Indian government.

Looking on the bright side, it is reassuring that Indian democracy works.

Congress Party leaders did not quibble over the election results as their connterparts shamelessly do in many less democratic nations of the South. The party was subjected to a humiliating post-mortem even before the final results were out. "We accept defeat. There is no denial of this fact that people have rejected us," conceded Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, the campaign manager for the Congress Party. Around 90 Indians lost their lives in balloting- and campaign-related vi-olence. It came as no surprise that the largest oumber of casualties were in the populous and poor northern state of Bihar. It was in Bihar and neighbouring Uttar Pradesh that the BJP scored highest. Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, was the scene of vicious communal rioting in 1992 after the Babri Mosque in the town of Ayodhya was destroyed by BJP supporters and other Hindu militants. The most disquieting characteristic of the BJP's

election campaign was that it claimed to represent the silent majority. Just as Mukherjee was remonstrating with Congress Party stalwarts about the poor showing of the party that has ruled India for all but four of the years since the country gained independence from Britain in 1947, another former foreign minister was hedging his bets oo being bestowed the Indian premiership. He was the BJP's choice for prime minister: Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

It would be somewhat odd if Vaipayee, a silver-haired septuagenarian and poet, succeeds Narasimha Rao as premier. Vajpayee shies away from the militant anti-Muslim and anti-Western rhetoric of his more brazen colleagues. in the BJP. He has been a parliamentarian for some 30 years, briefly tasting power when he served as foreign minister in 1977 and 1978. He is an upper-caste proponent of Hindutva, or Hindu chanvinism.

The victory sign is out necessarily for Vajpayee: Congress has as much chance of forming the next government as the BJP if it aligns itself with leftist parties. The fact that the performance of the BJP at the polls fell short of its leaders' expectations did not go un-noticed. Perhaps the people still have reservations about Hindutva. It was a Hindu fanatic who assassinated Ma-

hatma Mohandas Gandhi in 1948. Hindutya was not the only topic under discussion in the 825,000 polling stations throughout the vast subcontinent. Around one half of the 590 million eligible voters of India took part in the ballot. Indians cast their votes in the three-round election on 25 April, 2 May and 7 May. Polling was

supervised by 4.5 million officials. The Congress Party's performance was bad this year, but still considerably better than the 154 seats it won in 1977. This time, at least, most other opposition parties are determined to see to it that the BJP remains out of office. At stake is more than the Congress Party's political future. The point is India's political orientation, especially as far as

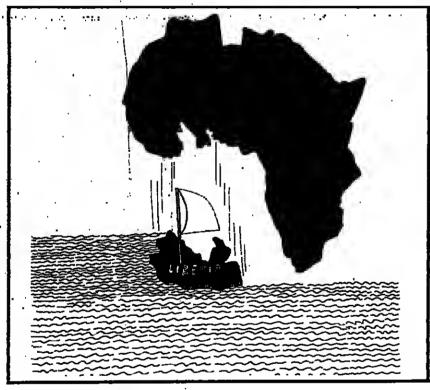
its foreign policy is concerned.

The BJP advocates ouclear armament for India so that it can match Asia's superpower, China, and oeighbouring Pakistan. The BJP also advocates tighter cootrol of foreign investment in India and a curtailment of the special rights enjoyed by India's 150 million-strong Muslim minority.

Like many seasoned politicians batthing for a place in history, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, the head of India's caretaker government, was unsure when to step down. When he did announce his resignation, India's President Shankar Dayal Sharma asked him to stay on as caretaker. Rao held on to his parliamentary seat in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, but many of his cabinet ministers lost theirs. To restore the Congress Party's credibility, the party leaders are to regroup and prove that Congress still counts.

The National Front-Left Front coalition of leftist parties, which includes the world's largest communist party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), performed well. The socialist Janata Dal Party and its communist allies hold the key to the success of any coalitioo government. The left has made it abundantly clear that under no circumstances will it support a BJP-led coalition. The left has also indicated that it is not going to tamper too much with the fundamentals of the economic deregulation programme instituted by the Congress Party leaders.

What is even more bizarre is that a host of ex-Congress splinter groups and regional- and caste-based parties hold the balance of power in the 545-seat legislature, the Lok Sobba. Is the BJP then the party of the silent majority? 1







th of the rainbow na

Sophia Christoforakis reviews South Africa's new constitution and talks to Justus de Goede, the new African democracy's ambassador in Cairo

"I come of those who taught me that property rights and language instruction. freedom was a necessary condition for human existence" South African Deputy President

Thabo Mbeki

South Africa's new constitution, also referred to as the country's new birth certificate, was adopted by the special Constitutional Assembly on 9 May. "It is indeed a historic day, the hirthday of the rambow nation. Today is a day of joy, a day of celebration," said President Nelson Mandela.

The constitution was passed by an overwhelming majority of 421 to two. Some of the political parties noted shortcomings and pledged to challenge them in the constitutional court. The constitution will gradually take effect over the next three years, then come into force with the national elections in 1999.

The constitution's bill of rights has been heralded as one of the most liberal in the world, bearing many similarities to the freedom charter of the African National Congress (ANC). The bill enshrines affirmative action with regard to gender, race and religion, and a right-to-life clause will most probably do away with the death penalty. But the new constitution is chiefly welcomed because South Africa is a country where political interests have superseded people's rights; the constitution ensures that burnan rights will never be breached again.

And so it has come to pass that South Africa today undergoes her rebirth, cleansed of a horrible past, matured from a tentative beginning, and reaching out to the future with coofidence," a jubilant President Mandela told

the Constitutional Assembly in Cape Town. South African parliamentarians have found themselves in states of deadlock on many occasions while drafting the constitution over occasions while drafting the constitution over occasions while drafting the constitution over the last two years. There were three major areas a national council of provinces. Using the model of contention, pertaining to labour relations, of the German upper house, the Bundesrat, the

The interim constitution gave employers the right to lock out striking workers from production plants and hire replacements. The new constitution did not abolish this right but put constraints oo it.

The second debate involved property rights. The National Party (NP) insisted that a property clause be introduced to the new constitution regarding this as fundamental to a sound economic system and continued investor confidence. However, the property clause works more to the ANC's advantage, as it addresses their policy of land redistribution. The new clause allows expropriation, with adequate compensation, to safeguard "public interest".

The final area of contention concerned language instruction. The NP campaigned to maintain single-language schools. This would allow the Afrikaners - the white settlers, descendants of the Dutch, who were the principal engineers of apartheid -- to run schools that teach only in their own language, Afrikaans. The Afrikaners, who feel particularly threatened by assimilation, fear for the survival of their culture in post-apartheid South Africa. To appease them, an education clause was introduced that confers ethnic groups the right to establish "single-medium" schools.

The more controversial parts of the constitution grant any community sharing a common culture and language the right to self-determination and bestow new powers to the provinces. These two aspects appeared the federalist campaigners - the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the radical right-wing Freedom Front. Although self-determination is guaranteed, there are sufficient checks in the constitution allowing the government to sanction and control secessionist

ouncil will have 90 members, consisting of 10-person delegations from each province. This undoubtedly gives greater power to the provinces in shaping policies, although the IFP believes it will substantially reduce it.

Uodouhtedly, the most important change introduced by the oew constitution is that the Government of National Unity (GNU) will be annulled and majority rule introduced after the 1999 elections. This motivated the National Party to withdraw from the GNU as of 30 June. "It would be umatural to continue in the GNU while everybody knows that the principles on which it rests have already beeo discarded in the new constitution," explained NP leader Frederik W de Klerk. The pull-out signals the break-up of the two-year-old government, and it will be the first time that the NP has not beld cabinet positions since the 1920s. The NP will adopt a new role as the main opposition party. According to Mandela, the withdrawal of the NP reflects the fact that South Africa's young democracy has come of age and needs a vigorous opposition unfettered by participation in the

executive. The primary motivation behind the withdrawal is to take advantage of the three years that lie ahead before the 1999 elections to develop a clear alternative identity and platform. According to South African political theorist, Lawrence Schlemmer, the NP had compromised its position through its affiliation with the ANC and moved away from its traditional white right-wing constituency. Its supporters perceived that, as a member of the GNU, the party had made concessions that undermined entrenched white privileges. Meanwhile, the NP has been campaigning to reach a conservative section of the black South African electorate and has ambitions to become the largest party in the

Adiitional reporting by Heba Samir

What are the implications of the National Party's withdrawal from the government?

The external implications are economic. When the National Party announced its resignation last Thursday and the rand took a dive, I predicted that after the weekend the currency markets would calm down again. This is exactly what happened. As far as foreign policy is concerned, I don't think for a moment that there is going to be a change in the priorities of the Government of National Unity, which has been running for two years.

My own view was that the National Party had already decided, in principle, to leave the government anyway. It was just a question of timing and they left it till a moment when the constitution was about to be approved by the constituent assembly.

The National Party's argument against majority rule which is stipulated in the new constitution - is that South Africa is a complex society requiring some form of coalition.

What is your opinion?

I don't agree. None of the party leaders argued seriously against the constitution. Only two members of parliament voted against the constitution and 10 abstained, while everybody else supported

I think that the constitution is the real guarantee; the best bet for the protection of minorities and for the protection of social, linguistic and religious rights lies right there in this document, irrespective of what parliament looks like.

I think this is the point everyone is making: that this particular document is going to make sure that no government, however constituted, will be able to override the democratic rights each individual has. This is what makes me so positive about the con-

South Africa's new bill of rights is said to be one of the most democratic in the world today. What makes it so special? I think that one of the most novel aspects of the bill is that it stipulates the protection of socio-economic rights and the protection of property. The other question is that of self-determination.

I accept this being in the constitution because it affects lan-

guage and it affects customs, and it appears in other constitutions

where you have ethnically and religiously diverse societies. The right-to-life clause is pretty strong and will remove the death penalty. South Africa has been a democracy for but two years. That the new constitution has come so far already is a re-

Cairo's message

For probably as long as anyone can remember in the near past, the issue of peace has topped the agenda of discussion in the Middle East's socio-political and economic arenas. Peace has been linked to economic and social development, to promoting inter-Arab cooperation and normalisation of relations between Arab countries and Israel.

But while the Arabs have been pushing for a just and comprehensive end to the long-standing tension between Israel and its neighbours, Israel has simply been pushy. It has waltzed into Leb-anon on more than one occasion, closed off Gaza and the West Bank, slandered and slighted Syria's reluctance to wholeheartedly embrace a biased approach to conflict resolution, demanded changes in the PLO charter and otherwise forced Arafat to onesidedly prove his commitment to a comprehensive peace.

In short, the only tangible manifestation of its commitment to peace has been the freedom with which it slings the slogans of peace and the nomenclature of normalisation.

However, the tripartite summit between Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority, held in Cairo earlier this week, has left Israel with what should be a clear understanding of the Arab concept of peace. It is a united endeavour - one built upon the principles of understanding, cooperation and ise, not conditionality as Peres would have the world believe. The main accomplishment of this summit was that Israel will no longer have the chance to employ its divide and conquer strategy of policy manipulation.

The final status negotiations are now under way, and Arafat, backed by King Hussein and President Mubarak is armed, not backed by king Hussein and President Mubarak is arrived, not with rhetoric, but with the strength of his convictions and the knowledge that should peace be finally realised, there will be no losers, only partners. The road to peace is still cluttered by the shattered dreams of thousands. Should Peres, or the winner of the upcoming Israeli general elections, find it within himself to subscribe to this ideology, then, while history may not forget the past, with cooperation and determination, the Arabs and Is-

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The heady scent of power

The double standards exhibited by the US vis-à-vis Israel and the Arab world are proving dangerously alienating to Arab public opinion, writes Salah El-Din Hafez

"May God preserve us from calumny!" This is the call of the street these days that echoes in our public forums, in our mosques and in our churches. And we all know against whom it is directed: America, "our great friend and ally" whose false pretences no longer fool anyone and whose glaringly hiased policies have em-barrassed its "friends", giving their enemies the excuse to attack them and undermine their pol-

The US these days provides us with the worst possible model imaginable for a super-power that claims it wants to lead the world towards peace and stability. It has given full bead to double — if not triple or quadruple — standards in every aspect of its behaviour. What is forbiddee to us is perfectly accepted by the US when it comes to Israel. And the result of these multiple standards is that Israel has carte blanche to behave in the most brutal way, carried away by the heady scent of its own, uncootested power.

What is abundantly clear, however, is that the peoples of the Arab World have had it up to here. They are sick and tired of exhortations to patience and forbearance issued by their governments. Their rage can no longer be placated by the shallow excuse that America is passing through a difficult phase at present, that it is election time in the US and that, given the imperatives of the campaign, the US is oot to be

The facts give the lie to such excuses. Israel has always been, and remains close to, America's heart. The US is Israel's nurruring mother, forever protective of its child. But what we see today is a maternal passioo beyond all bounds. America's unstinting support of an ever in-creasingly bellicose Israel has reached an unparalleled level. For the first time an American

in order to prove to Israel and the Zionist lobby in the US that he is Israel's champion and most ardent defender. Indeed Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced during his recent visit to Washington that he was taken aback by the extent of American magnanimity.

The US must have been surprised by how feebly Arab governments reacted to Israel's savage aggression against civilians in Lebanon. At the same time, it is certainly disturbed by the profound popular anger and frustration against America's favoritism and its blatant support, in word and deed, for Israeli aggression.

Instance after instance of Israel's massacre of Arab civilians betrays the same scenario, from the genocide of women, children and the elderly in Dir Yasin nearly 50 years ago, the murder of school children in Bahar El-Baqar in Egypt, the massacre in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon, to the recent slaughter of innocent civilians in Qana, Lebanon, only e few weeks ago. All of these instances bear testimony to horrendous war crimes, perpetuated with unbridled ferocity, with the facit sanction of the West and the whole-hearted blessing and support of the US. The concerns voiced by the Arabs are simply written off by the Americans and Israelis, who think it is in the Arab psycho-logical make-up to rant and rave a bit and then

A calm and cool-headed reading of events makes but one interpretation possible. US policy, concocted by the Clinton administration, which includes 11 Jewish officials, and implemented by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, is plain foolbardy and stapid. If recent developments have demonstrated that Israeli and American concepts of peace, stability and security coincide, they have equally demonstrated that these do not match the perceptions held by plements policies that violate Egypt's own peace

most countries of the Arab world, particularly Egypt and Syria. While this discrepancy has been apparent before, during and after the Sharm El-Sheikh summit, it is clearer than ever in light of Israel's recent assault on Lebanon. Headlines are full of President Hosni Mubarak's fury, President Hafez Al-Assad's condemnation and the European Union's criticism of US-

Israeli complicity.

No sooner did the Sharm El-Sheikh summit end than Clinton flew off to Israel to chair a cabinet session. Donning a yarmulka, he announced that Israel's security was America's security. And from that day forward the US's coffers and military arsenal were open for Israel. Then the US and Israel signed a defence pact and the US gave the go shead for the Turkish-

Israeli military pact.
What happened next? America sent its secretary of state to negotiate a cease-fire according to Israeli conditions. Heedless of the blood of innocent Lebanese, the US blackmailed Syria, ignored Egypt and embarrassed the French for-eign minister who had trailed behind Christopher in his shuttle between Tel Aviv and Damascus. The US then blocked a resolution condenning Israel for the Qana massacre, wag-ing an abusive campaign against Boutros Ghali who had promoted the resolution in the face of

It is against this backdrop that we must examine US-Egyptian relations. Egypt and the US are bound by a network of political, economic and military links. However, this does not imply that our respective interests always coincide. There are radical differences, for instance, in our basic understanding of what constitutes peace, security and stability in the Middle East. Such differences are compounded when America imand security and undermines is regional role. In Egypt's view the regional security arrangements that resulted from the Reace Makers' conference reflect such glaring American favoritism for Israel and such a disregard for the interests of Egypt and the Arabs that in effect, they seek to impose an American-bicked Israeli hegcmony over region. Naturally, Egypt rejects'

such a formula out of hand.

While Israel insists on maintaining its nuclear usenal and America insists on exempting Israel. alone out of all countries in the world, from dismantling its nuclear capabilities until the peace treaties in the region are signed, Egypt has lead treaties in the region are spired, Egypt has lead the regional and international campaign to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction. Again American double standards threaten the national security of Egypt and the Arab world.

America seems intent in driving the region, back to a climate of polirisation and opposing military alliances. The US-Israeli defence alliance and the Turkish-Israeli military pact can

liance and the Turkish-kraeli military pact can only be interpreted by Egypt and Syria as di-

rected against themselves.

In light of the above, we can only assume that the aim of American tolicy — with its kidgloved iron grip — is to pressurise Egypt, fomenting trouble along its borders while abandoning it to its domestic economic and social problems. Terrorism counts among the most visible of these problems. Should we be surprised, then, that the leaders of extremism bave frequently been counted by American officials?

America may hope that Egypt will be too preoccupied in licking it own wounds to be a regional force to be redconed with. Such hopes though, are mistaken If history teaches us any thing, it is that excessive pressure precipitates explosions and that tylanny invites the most des-

The threat of water wars

In the light of the UN Secretary-General's warning that wars of the future could well. be over water, Mohamed Sid-Ahmed wonders whether Boutros Ghali's remark can serve as the springboard for a wholly new approach to the peace process

Speaking on a CNN question-and-answer programme aired last week, Boutros Boutros-Ghali warned that wars of the future are likely to be over water, particularly in the Middle East. In my book, Peace or Mirage, published last year, I took this thesis even further, positing that if scarcity of water in the Middle East could spark off wars in future, then, by the same token, ensuring its abundance might well be the key to peace. With the current peace process at a virtual standstill, the time has come to try and envisage aiternative formulas by allowing our imagination to break out of the mould of traditional thinking, perhaps even to soar beyond the objective constraints

of what is now scientifically possible. Let us imagine, for example, that much of the Mediterranean Sea can be evaporated and transformed into steam devoid of salt, then stored, after cooling, as potable water in huge reservoirs and used to irrigate the vast Arab deserts. It could be argued that transforming the an into what would in eshigh salimity, would result in severely disrupting the ecological balance achievements in the field of ecological throughout the Mediterranean basin.

This could be evoided by widening the pects of social engineering? Straits of Gibraltar and, eventually, the Suez Canal, to restore the sea to its origevaporation on such a massive scale, solar energy could be the answer. Not only is it safer than ouclear energy, whose dangers have been graphically illustrated by Chemobyl and other similar disasters, but, unlike nuclear energy, its destructive potential is as yet untapped.

ing rows of solar panels strung along the southern rim of the Mediterranean from Sinai to Gibraltar could amount to four times Europe's total consumption of energy today. As matters now stand, however, the desalination of sea water costs the oil-rieb Arab desert states \$1 per cubic metre, which is prohibitive for most national budgets. For the project to be economically viable, costs would have to go down at least a thousand-fold. This is not as far-fetched as it seems, considering that computer prototypes can cost 10,000 times the price of their massproduced commercial counterparts. A radical drop in prices is central to the idea of a desalination project, extending to an entire sea.

There is nothing to say that modern science, which is scoring one breakthrough after another in the field of genetic engineering, is not capable of achieving similar results in the field of ecological engineering. This raises an interesting philosophical question: can Man's successful hamessing of Nature sence be another Dead Sea, with its belp him overcome his struggle with his fellow-man? In other words, can

inal level. As to the source of energy by the notion of scarcity, which fig-that must be harnessed to carry out ures prominently in Israel's calculations, whether when it comes to its expansionism (to counter scarcity of land) or to its foot-dragging on the question of withdrawing from the Golan, Arab Palestine and southern Lebanon (to counter scarcity of water). Scarcity of land and water is also a sa-According to knowledgeable sci-entific sources the amount of energy that can be hamessed from the sun us-

because of lack of water. When scarcity prevails, the "other" is perceived as an aggressor and this perception will oot change as long as scarcity is not replaced by abundance, notably abundance of water, which, thanks to genetic engineering, can transform barren deserts into cultivated fields.

In a practical application of the max-

im that necessity is the mother of invention, Israel made significant progress in solar energy technology in a bid to develop an alternative source of energy to petroleum which, between the '73 war and the Madrid conference, proved to be a potent bargaining chip in the hands of the Arabs. Still, Israel's qualitative edge in the field of solar energy is of little effect in the absence of peace with its neighbours, who dispose of the vast expanses of territory required to set up the solar panels by which energy can be harnessed. In those terms, joint Arab-Israeli exploitation of solar energy can become a meaningful example of posquality (scientific research) and Arab quantity (desert space), instead of baving the quality/quantity dichotomy remain, as has often been the case, a reasoo for friction and conflict.

For example, the Arab-Israeli conflict is governed to a very great extent lar energy, the dichotomy oced not necessarily operate in Israel's favour. For all that it does enjoy an undeniable advantage in this field, it is not the only source of technological knowhow, and the Arabs can easily resort to other nations for this, notably the nations of the Far East which, unlike the US and the EU, are neither under pressure from their Jewish lobbies nor

(albeit for different reasons), both capable of developing the technological know-how to do so: China, a burgeoning great power which is also suffering from a growing shortage of water, and Japan, an industrial giant whose infrastructure is heavily de-

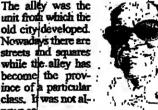
pendent on Arab oil. Once the Arabs set up joint de-salination projects with Far Eastern partners, the enormous commercial possibilities on offer will not be lost on the West, and we are likely to see many developed Western nations rush to follow suit. This will enable the Arabs to negotiate with Israel from a position of strength, by proving that they can desalinate sea water and reclaim deserts, with or without Israel's help. It will also place Israel before a clear choice: either to extend its cooperation to the Arabs on their terms, or confirm once and for all that it is incapable of envisaging peace as a framework for the development of the region as a whole rather than as a mechanism by which to im-The last time the peace process was

threatened with collapse following the Hamas suicide attacks in Israel, the international community, led by the US, moved with alacmy to convene the Sharm El-Sheikh summit in a bid to get it back on track. Perhaps the time has come for another international conference, aimed this time not at salvaging an undeniably shaky process but at laying the groundwork for a genuine peace designed to benefit all the parties involved in the Middle East conflict. To that end, the efforts of the international scientific community must be mobilised to ensure the abundance of water and lay to rest the spectre of future water wars now haunting the region.

Index of community:

By Naguib Mahfouz

The alley was the unit from which the old city developed. Nowadays there are streets and squares while the alley has become the province of a particular



I grev up in Darb Innuz. it was a typical alley which contained a raba', a house for the poor, where each family occupied a room and shared communal facilities. In Darb Irmuz the raba was occupied by the family of a soldier. the employee of an electricity company and a blind beggar and his

'Opposite the raba' was the dawor the residence of the Soukkaris. one of the most prominent families of the quarter. During Ramadan and on other feasts the gates were opened to the residents of the district to reveal a spacious courtyard with a targe solumies and ladies haramles. The Homossanis were another local family of notables, as were the

Bannans: coffee merchants, and the Mekilems, well-known rag traders. Darb Imuz was also home to an Turkish family, the Kharboths.

The raba and the dawar were the

extremes, between which were the tiouses of the middle classes. The alby was an index of community. The women of the raba' worked for the families of the dawar, and the expenses of any wedding or functal inthe raba were met by the notables. Today I sometimes wonder if peopie know even the names of their neignbours.

Bused on an interview by Mohamed Salmawy.

The Press This Week **Qana fallout**

Al-Ahram: "Throughout the past weeks, we have urged continuously that the first step in confronting current and future Israeli aggressions is to agree on a unified Arab strategy for both peace and deterrence. Otherwise, we will have conceded to an Israeli peace, imposed upon the region, unlimited and unconstrained by a challenging

Al-Mussawar: "I believe that Boutros Ghali has saved peace by releasing his [Qana] report, for he has renewed our hope in the possibility of the triumph of right-eousness, against all pressures. Like Clinton and Peres, he also had up-coming elections, but he would not allow them to blind his vision and lose him the ability to distinguish between right and wroog.

Al-Akhbar: "Though the whole world, including UN reports, has condemned Israeli brutality, the American administration, whose spoilt brat Israel is, has raised out even an eyebrow at the flowing blood in Lebanon. Meanwhile, the conscience of some Israeli writers has awakened, publishing articles in the Israeli press exposing the Israeli aggressioo against Lebanon and its American backing.

Al-Gomhuria: "We are still congratulating ourselves on the cease-fire in Lebanon, but this matter has to be studied so that it is not repeated in the future. Lebanoo did not declare war on Israel; all it did was demand the application of the UN resolutions that stipulate the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from South Lebanon. But there is a funny and sad formula which says that Israel is protecting its borders — fine, but does not Lebanon have the same right to protect its borders, too?"

Al-Wafd: "The United States has robbed Egypt of its leadership role in the Arab world, ever since Egypt fell into the 'peace trap'. The US has marginalised Egypt's role in the Arab world. And when the American administration directed the massacres in south Lebanon it gave not a thought to the effect this will have on Egypt, as it witnesses what is taking place and remains silent."

Al-Ahram: "Had it oot been for the initiative of the British newspaper, The Independent, and its Beirut cor-respondent, Robert Fisk... the real dimensions of this horrible crime [committed by Israel in Qana] would never have been revealed... The committee currently discussing the press law [in Egypt] should have learned a lesson informing Israel!"

from this - a lesson on how a strong, independent and free press can play a role in defending people's rights. Had it done so, it would not have expended such time and effort in a relentless effort to silence voices and ter-

Al-Shaab: "America's pro-Israeli stance is nothing new. What is new is the degree of disregard and contempt in all Arabs shown by the American president. Today, the American president has revealed the truth of the American sentiments which are bostile to the Arabs and

Al-Ahrams "Dr Boutros Ghali is to be the first, and the last, Arab United Nations Secretary General. His is e precedent which will never be repeated. The reason, is that both the US and Israel hold Ghali personally accountable for the UN report on the Qans massacre, com-mitted by Israel under the leadership of the war criminal Shimon Peres against civilians in South Lebanon."

Al-Ahrar: "As for Clinton - Israel's good boy - he has denied the fact that the Qann massacre happened intentionally saying rather it is the result of a regretful

Rose El-Youssef: "With bloody hands, the United States defended Israel which mercilessly slaughtered tens of civilians in the big blood wedding held before the eyes and ears of the UN in Qana."

Al-Ahali: "For Clinton to reject any condemnation of Israel means that be has offered his protection for Israeli occupation and expansionism. This is an extremely serious development in the American position. The UN report on the Qana massacre would have been worthwhile had its only benefit been to expose this American position, especially since the ramifications of this position will make themselves felt, possibly in the not to distant future."

October: "With unprecedented impudence, Shimon Peres announced that the United Nations is the party responsible for the massacre committed by Israeli forces on 18 April, killing - intentionally and with premeditation - 102 Lebanese civilians. He added - unashamedly — that the UN Emergency Forces shouldn't have sheltered civilians in the Qana UN camp without



THE ciue to Arafat's character, the character of an man who has grown old and seen much, is to be found in the wrinkles that defineate his features. The lines of his face map a lifetime's struggle to

In press photographs Arafat often appears laughing, arm raised in salute. I wanted to show him, though, in opposite mood, a little testy perhaps, with his mouth closed, indicating speechlossness before mingly inexorable progress of events. And then, of course, there is his hattah, which has become a crowning symbol of Palestinian identity.

هكذا من الإعل

Close up

Salama A. Salama

Cairo's silver lining

Though the tripartite summit held in Cairo this week eliminated some of the misunderstandings that had clouded Palestinian-Jordanian : relations in particular, and inter-Arah relations in general, it was less successful in dispelling the general climate of pessimism that has dogged the peace process aince Israel's assault against Lehanoo. Such pessimism, compounded by the spine-less reaction of the US to Israel's bloody attacks Lebanese ciagainst vitians, has deepened with the continuing Israeli blockade in the West Bank and Gaza.

Whilst the leaders of Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority were stressing the importance of a just peace as the only strategic option for all peoples in the region, confirming their desire to resume meaningful negotiations at the earliest moment on all the various. Israeli-fighter were attacking Hezbullah positions in Eglim Al-Toffah and flew over Beirut for the first time since the cease-fire

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Though the joint com! munique at the end of the tripartite Cairo summit made no reference to Israel and was silent on the profoundly Israeli bias exhihited by Washington, itserved to reiterate the importance that the signatories attach to establishing a just peace, which necessarily in-volves the renunciation of positions based on expansion, supremacy and dommation. Without abandoning such concepts talk about peace will never amount to anything beyond an empty and meaningless rhetoric.

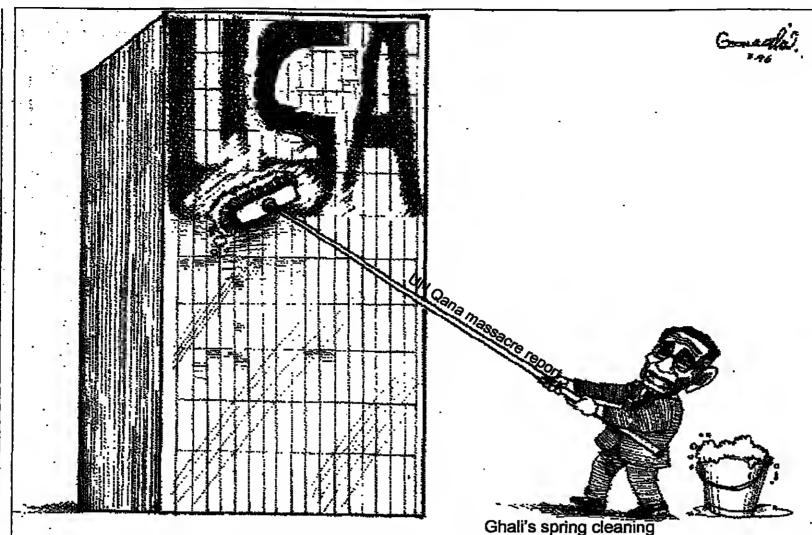
Whether the convening of the summit was a recent decision or whether it pre-dated the Israeli attack on Lebanon, which has had such a detrimental effect on the whole peace process, is unclear. What is apparent, though, is that the summit participants were keen to put recent events in parenthesis as they sought to underline their determinatioo: that negotiations should be resumed at the earliest possible convenience.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the summit, though, has been the realisation that individual efforts to negotiate with Israel have resulted only in a reinforcement of the old Israeli convictioo that violence and the use of military force underwrite its own position.

The majority of Israel's pains during negotiations, obtained by dealing separitely with each Arab party, came as a result of Isme!'s determination to capitalise on whatever small differences existed between the various partes with which it was neguiatiog. Indeed, such vas Israel's success in handling these mameuvres that one Qatari minister was beguiled into amouncing that Israel had eiery right to know in advance what advantages it could expect from peace. Unfortunately the minister in question did not stop to ask himself precisely what sort of peace it was that Israel was hoping to achieve.

lo this context the agreement between the participants in the three way summit to develop a mechanism of coordinatioo at ministerial level is of significance sioce it is only through such cooperation that we will be able to avoid the divisions on which Israel has till now been so keen to capitalise. Such coordination, too, should lighten the burden which will be shouldered by the PNA when final phase negotiations begin after the Israeli elections.

The elections are less than two weeks away, a imetable that lends much significance to the next summit meeting, to be convened in Amman early next month.



Soapbox

To nurture a seedling

"Why is it that in our country democracy oever seems, really, to take root?" Whenever this question is asked the reply is the same. The ruling class, it is always assumed, refuses to allow impartial elections. Truly popular representatives are coosequently prevented from coming to power. Yet the standard reply is misleading, if only because it is an over-

The problems facing democracy in Egypt can be likened to those that might beset a seedling transplanted to the wrong soil. It is common horticultural practice to prepare the soil before transplanting. And just like any gardener we must pre-pare the soil of Egypt before we can expect the seedling democracy - hy which I mean liberal democracy as practiced in Western Europe and the United States — to take root.

Over a century and a half's strenuous efforts directed towards enlightenment have so far been unsuccessful in dis-seminating the liberal thinking and the fundamental values necessary to democracy. Such values, certainly, have yet to inform the thinking of the grass roots of our body politic.

Perhaps the top-heavy nature of govern-ment in Egypt has miogated against such a trickle down effect. Certainly since the days of the pharoah god-kings, Egypt's poliocal culture has been weighted at the top. Social institutions tend to be weak, providing little to counter-balance a leaden bureaucracy. To furnish liberal democracy with an environment in which it can flourish we must engineer a number of hasic changes. These are a necessary pre-condition for the holding of free elections and the possible exchange of power that might be consequent upon such elections.

> Osama **El-Ghazaly**

This week's Soapbox speaker is editor-in-chief of Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya and a member of the Shura Council..

Adjusting to the real world

How robust are the institutions of a genuine and evolving civil society? Do the basic mechanisms exist to huild a stable public consensus on major issues of development, social progress and foreign policy? In any process of democratic transition these two questions tend to dominate the agenda.

In the Arab world such issues are further complicated by a host of other specific factors, including the dichotomous nature of civil society - i.e. fundamentalists versus non-fundamentalists - and the imposition of economic reforms by international financial institutions (ERSAPs). Problems also arise with regard to the process of peace-making and its implications for security and regional

 In discussing issues arising from economic reforms and structural adjustment and their likely impact on long-term economic growth and social equity one must, perforce, deal with contrasting projections, assumptions

In 1989, at a conference of the Institute for International Economics in Washington, the results of reform packages implemented throughout the 1980s in Latin America were analysed. The term "Washington consensus" was coined to describe the conventional wisdom of the day which informed decisions on policy reform, particularly within the US government and international financial institutions.

A leading economist involved in formulating the Washington consensus later wrote: "I tried to describe what was conventionally thought to be wise rather than what I thought wise; that is, it was intended as a positive rather than a normative list." He described not only the reform steps but also the sequence that were, more or less, unanimousrecommended by international agencies. Unfortunately, though they might appear at first to be economically sound, the reform packages contained within the Washington consensus often failed to deliver the expected results in terms of growth and equity.

While reform and adjustment strategies may be efficiency-enhancing, uncertainty normally prevails regarding the distribution of gains and losses from reform. There will be those who gain and those who lose, and this simple fact promotes a degree of uncertainty about the prospects of any given individual. The promise of shared growth tends to remain no more than a promise.

. Without majority support, reforms may well be short-lived, having fallen casualty to unfulfilled expectations. And if the voters are given a second chance, the electorate may reverse reforms whose gains are concentrated among small sections of the population, though the losses would be more diffuse, as has been shown by the recent experiences of both Poland and Hungary.

More significant still is the fact that, in most cases, people are normally asked to choose between a specific reform (i.e. Fund

Economic reform policies are redistributive by nature, favouring the rich over the poor, argues Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil. The alternative: a proper, and democratically formulated, trade-off between considerations of economic efficiency and those of social efficiency

and Bank-designed reform packages), and the status quo, when a more proper choice would be between alternative reform pack-

There is a oeed to endogenise the set of reforms, to remove them from beneath the shadow of international financial organisations and allow policy makers to work out home-grown reform and adjustment pack-

It is remarkable, in this context, to compar the experiences of Indonesia and Malaysia, the only two countries that adjusted without recourse to IMF and World Bank stabilisatioo and structural adjustment loans, with the experiences of many other adjusting countries. Both Indonesia and Malaysia facilitated a far superior distributional outcome than was the case with countries applying IMF and World Bank packages precisely be-cause they were free to ignore the rigid con-thions demanded by the international financial organisations.

Malaysia adjusted more through expenditure switching rather than through expenditure reduction, while in the case of Morocco, capital expenditures oo education and health care were slashed by 18 and 36 per cent respectively during its adjustment period (1982-86).

There is, of course, no such thing as universal convergence in matters pertaining to economic reform and adjustment; any consensus on economic correctness does not, in any case, take into account political feasibil-Policy makers, if they are intent oo heing "economically correct", find they have very little room in which to manoeuvre.

In short, passe partout adjustment programmes will not do. Countries in the Arab region, like countries in other regions, differ widely in their institutional structures and behavioural oorms. The apparent long-run "anchor" model of development, the World Bank recently admitted, obtained high-quality growth by an optimal mix of elaborate market incentives and active state interventions. And the quality of the educational system and the institutions in place constitute one of the hasic fundamentals for a successful transition from reform to growth.

Arab economies do not suffer from any lack of savings or investible funds. Rather. the problem lies with the very liquid nature of those savings (deposited with the domestic or foreign banks, and invested in government financial instruments). The weak supply responses and the semi-rentier behaviour of private investors (seeking high returns in private investors (seeking high returns in the shortest possible time), compounded by

the faulty sectoral composition of private investment constitute the main factors underlying the slow down of GDP growth and low employment creation in the Arab region. All these factors cootribute to the inefficient pattern of allocation of national savings and to low social productivity of aggregate investment prevalent in the Arab economies.

The decline in the level of public inestment in adjusting countries in the Arab region without any compensation to balance the conflicting objectives of efficiency, growth, equity, and political feasibility necessitates an active state rather than one following laissez-faire policies.

The restoration of macroeconomic discipline and the liberalisation of the economy does not in itself guarantee growth in the medium and longer terms. It is usually claimed that successful structural adjustment raises growth in the medium-term, typically after a transitory period of low growth or outright The mechanisms of transition from reform in growth are often neglected, or are simply based on textbook paradigms rather than oo the economic realities of individual Arab countries.

Arab countries which suffer from low real GDP growth and high levels of unemployment (especially among educated youth and new entrants into the labour market) do ont oeed short-term stabilisation but, instead, vigorous and high-quality growth. The assumed nexus of linkages and cumulative causalities from macroeconomic stabilisation to growth via the stimulation of foreign and domestic investors, leading to high growth through an upsurge of private sector investment and a reversal of capital flight, may fail to materialise in the absence of an elaborate incentive scheme, active state intervention, and high-quality institutions.

Reform and adjustment policies are redistributive by nature, and lead to socioeconomic conflicts of interest. In fact, trade and price reforms typically require large amounts of income redistribution which may not be politically acceptable. Given that political systems possess limited ability to impose dramatic income distributional shifts by democratic means, a trade-off ought to operate between issues of economic efficiency (limiting price distortions and restoring basic macro-balances) and considerations of social efficiency, leading to a more equitable degree of income distribution and greater shared growth.

"The great lack in market theory is its lack of social consciousness. It tends in treat peonle as abstract economic units. It leaves justice in the indifferent workings of the mar-ketplace, and that is a hlind faith." An apt comment by another leading development ecocomist. The social nets designed to initigate the social costs of adjustment policies as promoted by the IMF and World Bank, apply only in the short term. Future adjustment costs are totally ignored. The clear lack of an equity focus limits the coverage and efficiency of newly-established safety nets such as the Social Fund for Development in Egypt.

Only a comprehensive (and multi-dimensional) anti-poverty strategy could achieve a high measure of social efficiency in Arab societies. Such strategy needs to include three integrated elements: an expansion in productive employment opportunities; improvements in the earnings of the poorest sections of the populatioo; and a will to ensure that basic goods and services remain affordable. The net fiscal impact of such a strategy (i.e. its impact on budget deficits) needs to be carefully weighed against other targets such as political and social stability and not be narrowly guided by economic cost-benefit calculus.

Foreign financial accommodation is very much occided in this respect. Foreign assistance loans and grants are crucial if the delicate balance between economic efficiency and social efficiency is to be managed. But all these measures are short to methum-term solutions, for in the absence of a model of shared growth in the longer term. liberal ecocomic policies will almost certainly lose credibility and, eventually, collapse. Timely foreign aid could only-smooth shortterm transitional costs of reforms and adjustment (by reducing the political resistance of the most adversely affected groups), but it cannot induce growth effects and sustain liberal economic reforms on borrowed cred-

Only a systemic approach is capable of seizing the dynamic linkages between economic efficiency, growth, social justice, and political feasibility.

In the Arab world the provision of social services and public amenities (mainly educaoon, primary health care, and public transport) at subsidised and affordable prices has. since the 1950s, been a major source of legitimisation for the state. The more recent evacuation by the state from such spheres, under the pressure of budgetary crises and the new privatisation drive, leads in serious problems vis-a-vis the future balance between the state, the market, and civil society.

The provision of public goods and social

services through market mechanisms, at prices out of the reach of 50 per cent of the population has resulted in the evolution of informal health and education delivery systems provided through a network of clinics and schools mainly sponsored by Islamic organisations and agencies.

The failure of the market to satisfy the basic oeeds of the urban poor at a very ele-mentary level (i.e. inequitable rationing of educational and health services) leads to the decentralised and politically-motivated forms of provision at the community level. These provision at the community level. These practices contribute, in turn, to a political undermining of the legitimacy of the Arab state, cootributing to what might be termed the Robin Hood Effect.

The provision of other social services, which require huge capital outlay — roads, public mass transit — are beyond the financial capabilioes of any communal and politically-motivated collective initiatives. The state's failure in these domains will have serious ramifications for both the poor and middle sections of society.

The provision of health and educatioo services, despite their importance for development, constitute a serious hurden oo government finances in almost all Arab economies. a situation that might be alleviated, at least partly, hy an effective and progressive tax

The Arah region is currently in the midst of a profound crisis of political legitimisation, rooted in the marked downturn in material conditions. In fact, the socioeconomic foundations underpinning the political order in the Arab region throughout the 1970s and 1980s - massive inflows of oil reot, workers' remittances, and foreign aid - are likely to change dramatically in the 1990s, entailing a thorough process of economic and poliocal restructuring and re-

So far the majority of Arab countries lack any geouine mechanism to build up national consensus on major poliocal and economic issues. With the Arah world's drive towards economic liberalisation an urgent need has arisen to formulate a social contract that will regulate the relacionship between labour and capital and reconcile private with social wel-

The call for a full-fledged national dialogue among Egypt's political groupings and social forces could open the way for a genuine process of national consensusbuilding. The national dialogue, once begun, could well develop into an all-party national conference leading to a new consensus based on national renewal, socio-political reforms. and a new social pact. Only then will we be able m move away from short-term conflict resolution to the longer-range view of a sustainable consensus-building mechanism.

The writer is a professor of economics at Cairo University.

Israel's new recipe

By Salah Montasser

Israel has entered the final phase of electoral fever prior to the 29 May elections. These will be quite different from the 31 elections that have been held in Israel since its creation in 1948.

For the first time, a prime minister will be elected on a separate ballot from that of the members of the Knesset, whereas in previous elections the leader of the majority party was the prime minister.

The prime minister-elect must obtain more than half the valid votes. If this figure is not attained, a second ballot must be held 15 days later and the candidate with a simple majority is elected. This procedure is also the case where more than two candidates are running, but in the present elections, restricted to Peres and Netanyahu, it is likely that one of them will win in the first round unless a great oumber of voters deliberately withhold their votes from both candidates, in which case another round will have to be

If this scenario seems implausible, there is another possibility: the prime minister-elect will be unable to form a government if the Knesset elections bring in a party other than that to which he belongs - in other words, if Peres is elected and the Likud gain a majority, or if Netanyahu is elected with a labour majority.

The amended electoral law stipulates that the results must be announced 14 days after the elections are held; the prime minister presents his cabinet to the Knesset and his government's platform within 45 days of the publication of the electoral results. If this is not carried out within the time stipulated, prime ministerial elections are held again. If the same candidate wins again and fails to form a government, he is not allowed to run for election a third time.

This means that the post of prime minister is subject to a parliamentary majority, which can reject a prime minister that belongs to a different party. The amended electoral law, however, also allows the prime minister-elect to dissolve parliament if the parliamentary elections produce a majority in opposition to the prime minister. The dissolution of parliament must be followed by new elections within 60 days, both parliamentary and prime mini-

.There are those who declare that with this electoral amendment Israal has entered the phase of the "Second Israeli Republic". What is clear, in any case, is that this second republic announces a new phase of instability.

-Reflections By Hanl Shukrallah

up. "A land without a people" was handed over to "a people without a land". Western guilt at centuries of persecution and pogroms, climaxing in the Nazi holocaust, was explated, and Westem imperialism acquired its most successful venture ever, one that would reap tremendous dividends not only in terms of the oil-rich, geopolitically vital, Middle East region, but within the heart of the Western world itself.

Since that date, the centuries-long schism between "Christian Western Civilisation" and the "Hebrew race" has been solidly bridged. The Western self is identified in terms of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The Jew is oo longer a Semitic oriental but the ultimate White Western Man. Photos of fair-haired Uzi-wielding young Israeli soldiers, gazing dreamily into the sky, bring a twitch of excitement to the most anti-Semitic of Western hearts, and "The Jewish state" - notwithstanding oearly a millioo Palestinian Muslims, Christians and Druze - is ideologically constructed as a Western enclave surrounded by heards of "others" — others endowed with Semioc noses, dark skins, cunning and vicious ways, and "all that money".

Not only is the "Jewish State" of the West, it has come to be the West in microcosm, a supreme embodiment of Western imperialism - a parable for the West, to borrow loosely from a recent editorial in The Jerusalem Post.

Aptly entitled: "Hehron as parable", the editorial states, "The Jewish population of Heb-ron is small. There are altogether 7,000 Jews living in the city and its Jewish 'suburb' Kiryat Arba, while the Arab population is estimated at anywhere between \$0,000 and 120,000.

In 1948, 48 years ago yesterday, Israel was set And if there is one thing about which there is perfect agreement in Israel, it is that if the lewish population is left unprotected, it will be mercilessly massacred." The editorial goes on to say that "to kill the Jewish residents, Arabs will stah, ambush, throw petrol bomhs, run cars off the roads, and use suicide hombers." The implication of course is that Hebron'is a parable for Israel. surrounded as it is by millions of blood-thirsty Arabs, who will stab, ambush, etc.

In an adjacent article by the former Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon, the hutcher of Sabra and Shatila also notes the figures for Arabs and Jews in and around Hebron. He goes on to say: "But what matters is not whether there are 400 Jews in Hehron, hut the 4,000 years of Jewish history. What other people has such a monument, where the patriarchs and matriarchs of the nation rest in a single place?"

The supreme example of myth as a comerstone in the construction of a contemporary national and cultural identity, Israel provides the West with a portrait of Dorian-Grey-like image of its owo founding myths. Its tremendous success story is the ultimate model for the articulation of myth, the dispossession and oppression of "others", and the construction of those "others" as a deadly threat, as a way for creating a mythical identity, cementing it and neutralising the profound cootradictions within it.

Thus another Jerusalem Post editorial, published at the time of the Hamas/Jihad suicide bombings, can tell us that, "to Westerners", the cause of a movement such as Hamas and Jihad "is monstrous and revolting" and that "what Israel and the Western world are facing is not a

Israel as parable

tiny group of hums, but a powerful movement with mass appeal." Bernard Lewis, America's supreme authority on Arabs and Muslims, could write, several years ago, that, "to the modern Western observer, the political role of Islam in the world today appears in be something of an anomaly... anachronistic and indeed absurd."

The great irony in this, of course, is that it makes the fundamental rationale upon which the whole ideology of Zionism is based redundant. The founding fathers of Zionism won their battle against "assimilatiooist" Jews hy asserting the immutable nature of the divide separating the Jews from Western Christian civilisation. It was only with the rise of Nazism that Ziooism could be transformed from a micority view among the Jews of Europe into the dominant ideology of the Jewish minorities of the

Honk-nosed and vicious hordes we may be, but wby all the agony? Since the Jewish state is part of Western civilisation, and since Western civilisation is defined in terms of what Arabs, Muslims and other "Orientals" are not, and since, in the first place, it was Western civilisation that gave rise to the idea of a Jewish state, would it not have made considerably more sense to establish that state in the West? Would not a part of Germany have been, in fact, a more appropriate site for that state, in terms of logistics, civilisational affinity, and, not least, justice?

A frivolous thought on the occasion of the 48th anniversary of the usurpation of Palestine the frivolity underlined oot just by the march of history, but no less so by the fact that, for the Jewish State to become Western, it had to be planted in the East.

The Property of

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In a little aspic

FROM THE 19-21 May the Italian Cultural Institute will host a symposium devoted to the preservation of the cultural heritage of both Egypt and Europe. The ons on Egyptian monuments begin on the afternoon of 20 May, wheo Shawki Nakhla will address the plight of the Sphinx. Sessions continue with discussions of specific restorotion projects at Tell El-Amarua, the Elephantine Temple complex and the Luxor temple. While some of the sessions are devoted to technical matters, such as the problems enconotered in restoring polychromatic wood, others are of a more geoeral interest, focusing on a variety of architectural styles and questions of conservation, ranging from the preservation of early Islamic architecture to saving twentieth century huildings in Alexandria. Sponsored by the European Union, the seminar will also include an exhibition of photographic images under the title "The Polluted City."



Her halo intact

David Blake pays tribute to Geilane Rathle, doyenne of Egypt's voice teachers

Halos are very fragile things even if you happen to be an authenticated saint. Yet they are better than crowns, if only because they are more secure. Crowns get knocked off the head in revolutions. Halos, never. They can withstand the assassin's bullet and even bad opinion.

It seems Geilane Rathle, who died 12 years ago, was a saint of certain per-- of music and of operatic singing. Opera singers themselves are seldom saintly. Their tongues are often as strong as their larynxes. But saint you must be to know how to manage opera singers. Great or small they suffer the same malaise de metier. How's my voice? Will it stand up to the strain? Is it fading away? Will I be able to use it at 80? Some are able, some are not. It all depends oo your character - and your teacher.

This is where Madame Rathle comes in. From the age of five she learned to sing and play piano. She was born in Egypt, of Armenian descent, and quickly grew to attend the Conservatoire Bergrune. She did so well here in Cairo, almost as a prodigy, that she graduated immediately into the Trinity College of London Music Academy here in Egypt. A brief period with her voice professor followed and he told her she was more than ready to make the trip to Italy to study at the all-important Milan Conservatoire of Voice.

But she had a problem. While at the Bergrune College sbe bad falleo in love with and married Fernand Rathle, a young lawyer who was studying the violin and who like her had a voice of quality, a fine tenor. They had two children, Christiane and Claude, the latter now a bass in the Cairo Opera Com-

Geilane Rathle's decision was made, encouraged hy her husband, and she went to Milan. Once again, in a very short time, she obtained a diploma in voice training from the Milan Conservatoire. This was more than satis-

Music

Her voice was a rare thing — apparently, in spite of her youth, a genuine dramatic soprano whose repertory has all the most extensive roles in opera. As well as this voice she had the rare quality of imparting the almost mystical gift of singing to other students. This gift is rarer than having a voice. It is a gift almost of divination and

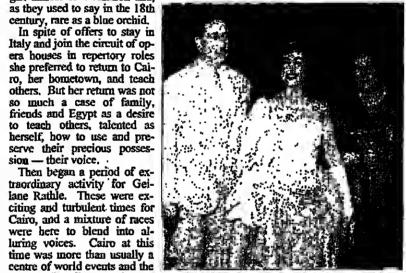
as they used to say in the 18th century, rare as a blue orchid. In spite of offers to stay in Italy and join the circuit of opera houses in repertory roles she preferred to return to Cairo, her bometown, and teach others. But her return was not so much a case of family, friends and Egypt as a desire to teach others, talented as herself, how to use and preserve their precious possession — their voice.

Then began a period of extraordinary activity for Gel-lane Rathle. These were exciting and turbulent times for Cairo, and a mixture of races were here to blend into alsplendour for the display of professor Geilane Rathle voices, at this time mostly for-

eign. Rathle wanted to alter this situatioo quite seriously. She knew that Egyptian voices were as good as those from abroad and her wish was to display them. She did a magnificent joh, and did it virtually alone. Her personality, talent and toughness pulled

her through. Opera houses of the world are united in their endless search for new voices. The Mct, New York oeeds spinto sopranos; Berlin, Bayreuth, in fact all Germany cries for voices, especially hig Wagnerian ones of any sex; Italy

has voices but no teachers; Covent Garden, London needs anything going. Madame Rathle's heydey spanned the mid- to late-20th century. Even in her time technology was offering everything but the supply of voices, which were dwindling to the present drought cooditions. She became a vocal pedagogue, a member of that unique race



opera of Ismail was a place of Abn Bakr Khairat, Amira Kamel, centre, and

which consists mostly of women: a sibyl, a muse, an activator, a stimulator, a skin and soul feeder, an angel of support on the battlefields of opera - a den mother. Her protective embrace was warm,

loving and included a sharp jab to the jaw of any intruder who came to damage her flock. She joined the mysterious priestesses of singing, like Ma-thilde Marchesi and Aglaja Von Orgeni. Her flock were her life and she produced a large one. Hardly a living singer of Cairo has not learned something from her, and her aid went out to all — grand opera performers, musical comedy performers, pop performers and actors. She loved words bound by tone — not dry words, not stand and deliver tone without words. The latter is called open voice singing and wears the voice. She would not endure wohble or scream or broken registers. All her singers — one in particular, Reda El-Wakil — show her standards

in action. This particular bass shows the importance she placed on noble projection, unhurried tone and, best of all, the proper fashion of shaping the mouth; it must always be beautifully formed with no shouting. Geilanc Rathle also aided Abdel-Halim Hafez, maybe showing him how to project and float his tone when, at the end of his life, the voice was beginning to lose some of its power.

She was the centre of a salon in Cairo. Everything operatic passed through her doors. She was welcoming even to pashas and to teenagers searching for knowledge. When the construction of the building of Madinet Al-Fonoun by Dr Abu Bakr Khairat was completed, Geilane Rathle became the voice training professor at the first Egyptian Con-servatoire. Amira Kamel, Nabila Erian, Hassan Kami, Awatef El-Sharqawi, Violette Makar, Youssef Ezzat and many others are luminaries

from the Rathle house of operatic achievement. She gave to Cairo its moment of great operatic distinction, and her pupils have carried on her work on stage

and in class at the present time. She was impressive and must have been lovable. Only very chosen ones receive gratitude for their devotion and high standards in imparting knowledge. Her students and everyone concerned, even peripherally, talk of her caring love. It is the highest praise that can be

Gruppo Danza Oggi; Il Filo di Arianno: Potrizia Salvatori. decor and choreography; Cai-ro Opera House, Gomhouriya Theatre: 11 May

If you are planning oo going to Hell this summer, and it is your first visit, then go to Danned Tours Inc Worldwide and get a guide - you'll oeed one, most probably two - to navigate your way through Il Filo di Arianna. In fact, you'll oced more than a guide.

Arianna (Ariadne) is one of the most useful of all Greek invths. She moved almost as quiekly as the Gods. In Crete he saved berself and Theseus from the jaws of the minotaur hy trailing a thread in and out of the labyrinth. This was a key moment of her life. She sailed away with Theseus to Naxos in the Cyclades, where Theseus promptly dumped her. She remained ever-faithful to the idea of his return. Dioovsus came instead, and so she sailed away again, this time to eternal space to become a coostellatioo. She is many operas, ballets, paintings and sculptures, and a good light Beaume to enrich autumn dinner par-

Last week she landed in the Gombouriya, which is where your travel guide and tour operator is needed. Where are we in Il Filo at the Goinbouria? A voice tells us before the performance that we will be in the labyrinth of the minotaur. A labyrinth is a place which goes on forever. You can never get out of it without

The mooing of cows_

out the escape line, you are like ourses' uniforms in a hos- helped, but this was not grantdone for. Hell enfolds you. Greek mythology spins the deranged. Nothing ever hap-onward rush of the drama with-

than death.

best of all stories — clear, a narrative, poetic, quite unfathomable and light of texture though hlood-soaked. But Patrizia Salvatori manages to cover the electric units and so the state of the electric units and so the electric units and er the elegant, wiry and so-phisticated myth with a load of bringing on of a hlood-half-cooked pasta. Salvatori splattered minotaur or Ariadne was oo her way when her versioo of the story began, but the Greek secret of serpentine simplicity totally evades her and she gets lost in her own particular labyrioth. The opening sequences are

repetitive and seem, at least to to go for the narrative of Ariadne. So we are in the labyrinth. And who are these rather aloof creatures swaying costumes and mostly masked? Where is Ariadne, where Theseus and where the Minotaur? of Il Filo there is neither beast nor beauty, but people executing very ordinary, very ba-

nal choreography, oeither damned nor lost. Some shapes framed in seethrough fabrics move around in wearing blood-stained uniforms, forms like patients in intensive there were oo screams of terror a guide — il filo (the thread). care units. The colours are of- from this audience. The labyrinth is Hell - with- ten white and the drapes are An interval might have gressed, changes began to take

on the run from a fate worse

During the past few years Cairo has hosted some really splendid dance companies ballet for short - both elassically upright and almost hor-izontal "dance theatre". Rethis spectator, to make no effort outo Greco from Italy, for example, is one of the best. make midnight chatter — love-Feeling romantic? We've had ly sub-Messican voices. If you Feeling romantic? We've had ly sub-Messiean voices. If you it. Dramatic realist? We've have lost your child's budhad that too, and the dancers about in semi-darkness in latex are always full of vigor and projectability.

The Oggi Dance Group has quite a hig showing of dancers. In tales such as this one there is They suggested in this pronothing like the villain; the duction a team of well-behaved, beast always takes precedence uninvolved and disinterested beover beauty. In this production ings performing by rote a ritual they themselves do not understand. Courtly, gracious and stylised - rather like an oldfashioned dress show. Nothing bloody and, even though a few dancers run across the stage

pital for the well-behaved but ed. We were meant to feel the out interruption. Meaning? There seemed to be none. Labyrinths usually have lost souls moving about - or ladies out for the night caught in ambiguous situations. There were oone. It would have been nice to watch a star but the skies were empty.

If Il Filo was bard on the eye

David Blake

laments a minotaur

it was better on the ear. There was a sound track of constantly changing effects. There was the sea breaking gently on a beach.. The sea becomes a nightscape: insects rattle and whisper, hirds (lots of birds) gerigar, you might look in at the aviary performing at Il Filo. And of course bulls - or

cows. Was the minotaur a cow of a man, or had there been transsexual activities in Crete this summer among the hierophantic cattle? We will never know anything. The Oggi Dance Group fudges even the budgerigers. Everything seems totally out of touch with everything else.

And the audience? Some loved it, some were in touch with the exit. However, fortunately, there was an audience till the end. As the night proplace. The group was sudden-ly into rapid movement. Down by the cow pen the mooing increased. Something was breaking loose. Could it be the minataur himself? About now, as Il Filo was in

its run up to the finish, the gang was hard at it showing some sort of involvement. One solitary girl rushes on stage and executes a phenomenal grande jetée across She crosses the Gombouriya stage in about two leaps. A knock down take of

something athletic, balletic. She is jumping like Hell. Af-ter all, as the voice said at the beginning, we've been in Hell. But there is nothing like a jumping ballet. There she goes. She is coming again, from another angle. Again, the big jump. This child has escaped from Russia. Her jumps were absolutely mar-

And it is over. The scene changes. And on comes — can it be? — Ariadne herself dressed like my great-greatgreat grandmother as Carmen: black gypsy wig, a flamenco shawl around her shoulders, and in a dress. A real lady in a dress. She holds yards of blood-red silk rope and busies herself tying it around the necks of the cast on stage symbols. It's the thread, Ariadae's thread, and we have come through the ordeal to deliverance.

No more question except where is the cow? Maybe next time the Oggi visits Čairo they can bring Europa and her bull. Something worth

Listings

Italian Cultural Centre, 3 El-Sheikh El-Marsafi St, Zamalek. Tel 340 8791.

22 May, 7pm. Directed by Pietre Germi (1953), star-rine M Belli and E Crisa.

Japanese Caltural Centre, 106 Qast El-Aini St. Garden City. 16 May, 6pm. Directed by Yojiro Takida (1993).

pm. Starring Ahmod Zaki and Raghda.

Baxter (1988), directed by J Boivin. EXHIBITIONS ... 21 May, 7pm.
Le Petit Criminel (1991), directed by J Doillon. 22 May, 7pm.

Georges El-Baligouri (Printings) Mashrabiya Gellery, 8 Champoliton St. Downtown. Tel 378 4494. Daily exe Fri, 11am-Spm. Until 16 May. Goethe Institute, 5 Abdel-Salam Aref St. Downstown. Tel 575 9877. 21 May. Randa Straath (Photographs)
Sony Gallery, AUC, Main Comput,
El-Sheikh Rihan St. Tel 357 5436.
Daily exc Pri & Sat, 9am-12pm & 6.30pm. This seven-minute film is an 1895 proction, directed by Max Sc The Schadsbovsky Brothers Goethe Institute, as above. 21 May. A 1995 production directed by V Vinders in three 50-minute parts.

Daily exc Pri & Sat, sum-12pm & form-5pm. Until 18 May.
Black and white portraits of out-standing individuals captured through the photographer's lens over the years. The First Spring Enhibition
Doroub Gallery, 4 Latin America St.
Garden City. Tel 354 7951. Daily
10an-10pn. Until 20 May.
Croup show including ceramics,
sculptures and bas-relief.

Hazem Ri-Mestikawi (Sculpture) Espece Gallery, 1 El-Shertifein St. Downtown. Tel 393 1699. Daily exc Fri, 10am-2pm & 3pm-8pnt. Until 20

Traditional Arts Fair & General Ex-hibition
El-Ghouri Palaca, El-Hussein, Daily exc Fri, 10am-8pm, Until 20 May. Forty Egyptim artists exhibit their work.

Le Citte Inquinete (Photographs) Indian Cultural Centra, 3 El-Shekh El-Marsafi St. Zamalek, Tal 340 8791. Daily 10am-2pm & 5pm-8pm. Until 26 May.

Student Exhibition Event Gallery, Main Campus, AUC, El-Sheikk Rihan St. Tel 357 3436. Daily exc Fri & Sat, 9am-9pm. Until 31 May.

Magdi Abdel-Axix Eusem (Paintings) & Hassan Osmean (Sculptores) Extra Gallery, 3 El-Nessin & Zam-alek, Tejl 340 6293, Daily 10.30am-2pm & 5pm-3pm. Until 31 May.

Sayed Saadeddin (Paintings) & Ma-hamed Mandour (Ceremics) Khan Ri-Maghraby Gallery, 18 El-Mansour Mohamed St. Zamalek. Tel 340 3349. Daily exc San, 10.30am-3pm & 5pm-8.30pm. Until 31 May.

Resteration
El-Blanager, Opera House Grounds,
Gezira. Tel 340 6361. Daily 10am10pm. Until 31 May.
Exhibition entitled Conservation of
The National Cultural Heritage of The
Countries of The European Union. Group Exhibition
Spire Arts Gollery, 6 Rd 77C, Maadi,
Tel 351 4362, Delly exe Sun, 10emspm. theil I June.
Paintings of ten Egyptim artista, inctuding Omer El-Nagdi, Ahmed
Found Selim and Mustafa El-Razzaz,
for the insuranting of the sullery.

Ingried Galer (Paintings)
Cairo-Berlin Gallery, 17 Youssef ElGuindi St, Bab El-Louk. Tel 393 1764,
Daily exc Sun, 10,30am-2pm & 5pm3 30am.

The Museum of Mr and Mrs Melamed Mahmood Khalil I Kajour El-Akhakid St. Dakki, Tel 336 2376. Daily ex: Mon, 10am-fore. Daily ext Mon, Iden-forn.

Hgypt's largest collec-tion of innesteath cen-hry European art, ansassed by the late Mahmoud Khalil, in-cluding works by Com-bet, Van Gogh, Gan-guin, Mouet and Rodin.

Egyptian Manetum
Tahrir Sq. Downtown.
Tel 575 4319. Daily exc.
Fri. 8am-5pm; Fri 9am11. 15am & Ipn-3pm.
An instanding collection of Pharaonic and
Protennic treasures and
the controversial matu-

Copte Museums
May Grist, Old Cairo.
Tel 362 8766. Daily exc
Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9amHam & Ipm-3pm.
Founded in 1910, the museum houses
the largest collection of Coptic art and
artefacts in the world.

El-Sagh
Normans
Hopolts.

Islamic Musicam
Port Said St. Ahmed Maher St. Bab
Ed-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520.
Daily exc Fri. 9am-4pm; Fri 9am11.30am & 2pm-4pm.
A vest collection of Islamic arts and
casts including mashrabiya, instruware caramics, textiles, woodwark
and couns, drawn from Egypt's Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mameluke periods
and other countries in the Islamic
world.

Museum of Modern Egyptian Art Opera House Grounds, Gezira. Tel 340 6861, Daily ezc Mon, 10am-1pm 4: 5pm-9pm.

4: 5pm-9pm.
A permanent display of paintings and sculpture charting the modern art movement in Egypt, from its cartiest pioneers to latest practitioners.

Mohamed Nagoi Museum Château Pyramids, 9 Mahmoud Al-Gulnd St. Giza. A maseum devoted to the paintings of Mohamed Nagui (1888-1956).

Mahmond Mukhter Museum Tahrir St. Gezira. Daily exc Sun and Mon, 9am-1.30pm. A permanent collection of works by the sculptor Mahmood Mukhtur (d. 1934), whose granite monument to Sand Zaghloul stands near Qast El-Nil

FILMS

French Films Frenk Cultural Centre, Madraset El-Hogong El-Ferenstya St, Mounira. Tel 354 7679. 154 7679.

La Crise (1993), directed by C Ser-reau, 16 May, 7pm.

Les Granges Brulees (1973), directed by I Chapot, starring Alain Delon. 20 May, 7pm.

Sudden Death Sustain Heart El-Herraya II, El-Horreya Moll, Rassy, Hellopolis, Daily Ipm, 3pm 6pm & Spm. Metro, 35 Taleat Harb St., Owntown, Tel 393 3897, Daily 19am, Ipm, 3pm, 6pm & Spm.

First Kalejat
MGM, Rolleyar El-Nasr Sq. Maadi.
Tel 352 3066. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm,
6pm & 9pm. Caloo Sheresten, ElCalaa S., Giza. Tel 360 6081. Daily
10.30am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm & midnickt.

Bushwincked Radio, 24 Talast Harb St. Downtown. Tel 373 6562. Daily IQam, Ipm, 3pm,

El-Sagha (The Jewelers' Row) Normandp, 31 El-Haram St, He-liopolis, Tel 258 0254, Daily 8pm.

und Boys
El-Horreya I. El-Horreya Mall, Razy,
Heliopolis. Daily Ipm. 3pm. 6pm &
9pm. Ramasis Hilion I. Corniche El-Nil
St. Tal 574 7436. Daily 10.30am,
1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm &
midnight.

A Walk in The Clouds, El-Salem, 65 Abdel-Hamid Badawi St. Heliopolis. Tel 293 1072. Daily 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

Karim II, 13 Emadeddin St. Down-town. Tel 924 830. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

MUSIC

Vielin Concerto Frenck Cultural Centre, 27 Sabri Abu Alam St. Heliopolis. Tel 417 4824. 16 May, 8pm. Hussan Sharara performs.

Arabic Music Ensemble
Small Hall, Opera House, Gezira. Tel
342 0598. 16 May, 9pm.
Conducted by Salah Ghohasin.

Indian Films
Indian Caltural Centre, 23 Talout
Harb St. Downtown. Tel 393 3396.
Kassim Wadan, 16 May, 4pm.
Starring Amitab Becheban.
Bebirah, 20 May, 4pm.
Starring Amitab Becheban.

Commercial cinemas change their pro-grammes every Monday. The in-formation provided is valid through to Sunday after which it is wise to check Roots
Wetalet El-Ghostri. El-Hussein, ElArkar. Tel 355 1014. 17 May, 3.30pm.
Performed by Stephen Athanas (bess);
Pathy Selama (pieno), Ayman Sedia
(African and Latin percussions) Ramadam Mansour (tabla) and Mostafa Al-Abul-Dahah Mismi, 38 Talaat Harb St. Downtown. Tel 574 5656. Duily noon, 3.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.30pm, Rivoli I, 26 July St. Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Duily 1pm. 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. Cosmos II, 12 Esnadeddin St. Downtown. Tel 779 337. Duily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 5pm.

Indian Music Indian Cultural Course, 23 Talan Harb St. Domntown. Tel 393 3396, 18

Meis Hall, Opera House, Gezira Tel 342 0598: 18 May, 11 am. An Astpenian performace.

El-Nom Fli-Assal (Sound Asleep)
Rexp. Rexy Sq. Heliopolis. Tel 258
0344. Datly 10am, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.
Gamuss I, 12 Emadeddin St. Downtown. Tel 779 537. Daily 10am, 1pm,
3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Diana Palace, 17
El-Aff St. Emadeddis. Downtown. Tel
924 727. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm
4 0cm

Concerts for Vielin and Plane French Cultural Centre, 27 Sabri Abs Alons St. Heliopolis. Tel 417 4834, 19. May, Spm. Sami Brakim (violin) and Devid Hales (piano) perform.

E3-Lomanei (The Wattlen)
Lido, 23 Estadeddin St. Downtown.
Tel 934 284. Daily 10am, Ipm, 3pm,
6pm & 9pm, Sphinx, Sphinx Sq. Mohandestin. Tel 346 4017. Daily Spm.
Rivoli II, 26th July St, Downtown. Tel
575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm,
fram & 10pm. Cello, Clarinet and Piano Recital Small Hall, Opera House, Geziro. Tel 342 0593, 20 May, 9pm. Istakoza (Lobsters)
Tiba II. Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Dal-ty 10.30am. 3.30pm. 6.30pm. & 9.30pm. Starting Alumed Zeki and Raghda.

Music & Song Recital Small Hall, Opera House, as above 21 May, 9pm.
Amira Fouad, Nevine Alloube and
Walid Koriam perform. Lella Sakhena (A Hot Night) Tiba I, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

Brighamn Young University Chamber Orchestra

El-Gomhouriya Theaire,
Ataba, 20 May, 9pm & Eswart
Hall, Main Campus, AUC,
El-Sheith Riban St. Tel 337
5436, 22 May, 8pm.
Directed by Clyn-Barrus, the performance will be followed by Harwatha's Westlang Feast, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, where the BYU Orchestra will be joined by the Cano Choud Society inder Larry Cadin,

DANCE

Cleopatra & Kl-Nile Main Hall, Opera House, Gezira. Tel 342 0589. 19-22 May, Spot.
The Criro Opera Ballet Com-Kamel and Vladmurry Vlad-mir, composed by Arnsky, and conducted by Taha Na-gni; and El-Nile, directed and choreographed by Ahdel-Moneim Kamel, composed by Omar Khaira and con-ducted by Taha Nagui.

THEATRE

Khauasseen Wallace Theatre, Main Campus, AUC, El-Sheith Rihan St. Tel 357 5436, 16 May, 8pm.
The play is written by Tom Coash and directed by Eric Griscket.

LECTURES

Seven
Tahrir, 112 Tahrir St. Dokki. Tel 335
5726. Daily 3pm. Gepn & 9pm. Normandy, 31 El-Ahram St. Heliopolis.
Tel 258 0254. Daily 12.30pm. 3.30pm.
6.30pm & 9.30pm. El-Haram, ElHaram St. Giza. Tel 385 8358. Daily.
10am. Ipm. 3pm. 6pm & 9pm.
The seven dendly sins are seven waya
to dia. Hecus Pocus Ramus Hilton II, Corruche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7436, Deily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm & midnight. Symposium: The Conservation of National Cultural Haritage Isalian Cultural Castre, 3 El-Sheiki El-Marsafi St. Zamalek. Tel 340 8791, 19-21 May, 9.30am. Among the participants are technical advisors from the countries of the Eu-ropean Union, students of the faculities of Archaeology, Fine Arts, Archa-tecture and Tourism. Karim I, 13 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 924 830. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

The American Political-Economic Model and its Implication to Egypt and The Arab World Oriental Holt, Main Compus. AUC. El-Shelik Riban St. Tel 357 5021. 20. May Lynn. Any: I par.

Lecture by Dr Semir Pahalt, professor of Political Science, Dr Paul Sullivan assistant professor of Economics, Dr Charles Diagnond, assistant professor of Fetherman.

All information correct at time of going to press. However, it remains wis to check with venues first, since programmes, dates and times are subject to change at very short notice.

Picase telephone or send information to Listings, Al-Ahram Weekly, Galza S, Caro. Tel 5786064, Fax 5786089/833.

 Compiled by Injy El-Kashef

Around the galleries



YOUNG artists, all under 30, exhibit paintings, sculptures. glassworks, ceramics and mosaics at the Society of Fine Arts Gaffery. Worth noting is the mosaic tableau depicting fellahin, palm trees and feluceas by Noha El-Sayed Mo-

Mashrabiya Gallery shows 45 recent works by George El-Bahgoury. Mostly portraits and street scenes, some of these are inspired by the Fayoum portraits and all show a firm rootedness in the Egyptian artistic tradition.

The First Soring Salon at Douroub Gallery comprises works by 15 artists while "Les Femmes", at the Cairo-Berlin Gallery, is the title under which Margot Veillou is exhibiting her colourful, exuberant and witty portraits of

Wikalet Al-Ghoury is given over to a souk exhibiting works by 47 artists. In addition to watercolours by Ibrahim Chazaleh and drawings by Gamil Shafiq - to name but Ghezalen and drawings by Gamu Shanq — to name but two of the "fine artists" exhibiting— the show comprises works from the applied arts: ceramics from the Said El-Sadry Fustat workshop, arabesque furniture from Bayt Al-Sinari and stained glass.

Reviewed by Nagwa El-Ashri

ه کذامن را لا عمل

To th

Plain Talk I have just received what I can only describe as a gem of a book: Fine Arts: A Glossary, compiled by six researchers

from the Faculty of Al-Alsun (literally, "tongues", meaning

languages), Ain Shams University. Indeed, this magnificent publication does justice to the role for which the faculty was established: to be

a stronghold of a dynamie

The faculty, or school as it was originally called, dates back to the time of Mohamed

Ali. Coming to the fore in the wake of the French expedition

to Egypt, Mohamed Ali rec-ognised the importance of cul-

tural openness, particularly with Europe. It was thus that he decided to send missions of

young Egyptian students to study, in both Italy and France, the sciences needed

for modernising the country.

It was on one such mission

to France that a young Azhar-ite by the name of Rifa'e El-

Tahtawi went accompanying

the students as imam and su-

pervisor. So impressed was he

by what he witnessed there,

foreseeing its relevance to Egypt, that on his return be

founded the Al-Alsun School. In due course Rifa'e was or-

dered hy Mohamed Ali to

translate, together with his stu-

dents, a number of important

French books. Until the trans-

lations were completed, Rifa'e and his students led a near mo-

The Alsun can be regarded a

pioneering bastion of rigorous

translation in Egypt - indeed,

in all of the Arab world. Apart

from its staple language cours-

es in various "tongues" (English, French, Spanish, Italian,

aration of a glossary of words

from different disciplines and

fields of knowledge. The glos-

nastie existence.

movement of translation.

A complex web of attitudes

Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim World before 1700 was the title of a conference held last week by the American University in Cairo. David Blanks gives an overview of the papers presented by scholars from Egypt, France and the United States

The inhabitants of the Mediterranean region today are the beneficiaries of the world's richest cultural heritage. They are also victims. They have suffered terribly as a result of more than 5000 years of intense warfare and oppression brought on by the aggressive clash of competing states and ideologies. It was to examine this long tradition of triumphs and tragedies that this year's Second Annual Conference on Cross-Cultural Encounters was held.

Conference on cross-chaura Eucounicis was issue.

Conference participants were asked to consider past attitudes partly because it was felt that this would shed light on the origins of modern stereotypes. At the same time conference organisers hoped to advance scholarship by re-examining the East-West model, a useful but incomplete history connection that has dominated thinking complete binary opposition that has dominated thinking on this subject since the appearance of Edward Said's Orientalism (1978). Hence these lectures also sought to develop a more subtle and complex picture of cultural interaction. Finally, although a great deal has been written recently about Western perceptions of the Orient, far less attention has been given to the Eastern point-of-view; therefore, the third session of this conference was de-

voted to Islamic images of Europe.

In the keynote address, "Mirror of Chivalry: Salsh alDin in the Medieval European Imagination", Distinguished Visiting Professor John Victor Tolan (University of North Carolina at Greensboro) explained that
western attitudes towards Salsh al-Din went through
three distinct phases. To the Franks he was the man responsible for retaking Jerusalem and Palestine. Con-eloding that they had lost the Holy City as a result of their own wickedness, Western Christians portrayed Salah al-Din as an instrument of divine punishment. Yet because he treated the captured Latin leaders with courtesy and generosity, stories of his noble character soon cir-

culated in Europe. The failure of the Third Crusade led to the second phase in the creation of Salah al-Din's image. How could the flower of medieval chivalry fail to recapture the Holy Land? There had to be an explanation. Once again Eu-ropean chroniclers blamed the Christians themselves, especially their lack of cooperation; at the same time, however, they glorified the enemy as a way of justifying their defeat. No longer the "scourge of the Lord," Salah al-Din was described as "generous, valiant and noble". The final phase of Western attitudes becomes apparent

when the Crusades came to an end. As the legends grew, Salah al-Din was transformed from Europe's most worthy opponent to an exemplar of chivalry, a challenge to the universalist claims of Christian morality. Negative stereotypes of "orientals" were prevalent, but the "orien-

tal other" could also embody Western hopes and dreams. The keynote address was followed by three papers on western images of Islam. Le the first, Dr. Nabil Matar (Florida Institute of Technology) spoke about "Muslims in Early Modern England", demonstrating that there were hundreds of Muslims from the Ottoman Empire and North Africa in 17th century England. Refugees, former prisoners of war, servants, merchants, pirates, and travellers - Dr. Matar even identified one who seems to have been a lawyer. And then there were the rich and famous. The visit of the Moroccan ambassador in 1637 stunned London and its court. Over one hundred aldonnen and citizens accompanied the ambassador in a torchlit procession through the city. Similarly, London elites were delighted by a representative from the Ottoman court who visited in 1640. Still, the discrepancy between these real-life encounters and the image of Moors and Turks Matar noted that despite first hand experience of Islam, English writers and dramatists continued to stereotype Mus-

in my paper, entitled "Byzantium and the Muslim World". I analysed Byzantine views of Islam. Compared to northern Europeans the Byzantines had far more contact with their Muslim neighbours and their understanding of Islam was considerably more sophisticated. Like Professor Tolan and Matar, I found that negative stereotypes abounded, especially among Orthodox theologians, but there were positive images as well. Mutual respect is expressed in a medieval epic, Digenis Akritas, which means "two-blood border lord". It is the story of a Byzantine princess who marries an Arabian emir and gives birth to the hero Basil, a renowned warrior who lives in the Taurus mountains on the border between the Empire and the Caliphate. Like The Arabian Nights, this story lacks the fe-rocious intolerance of the "other" so frequently found in Western literature; indeed, on the whole, the Digenis Akritas calls for love and understanding between peoples of different religions but essentially the same culture. In the words of the story-teller: "War in general, or rumour of war, was never known in Basil's day in the least, but everywhere was peace and quietness and all men constantgave thanks to God."

Dr John Rodenbeck, Professor of English Literature at AUC, delivered a lecture entitled "Cervautes and Islam: Attitudes towards Islam and Islamic Culture in Don Quixote". More than any other panish author, Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) is remarkable for his knowledge of Islam. He ought to be: he spent five years as a prisoner of war in Algiers. Dr. Rodenbeck explained that in Don Quixote Cervantes exhibited respect for the "other." The Muslims in the "Captive's Tale" are portrayed sympathetically ically, and Cervantes' understanding of their faith is noteworthy in an era when the Spanish government was persecuting and expelling Muslims. It is interesting too, to recall that as a literary device Cervantes ascribed the novel to a Muslim writer whose manuscript he claims to have purchased from a street vendor in Toledo. The phrase "Blessed be Allah!" is repeated throughout the text.

On the second day of the conference, Elizabeth Sartain (AUC), Thabit Adbuliah (AUC) and Omaima Abou-Bakr (Cairo University) discussed Islamic images of Europe. Dr. Sartain began with a paper cotitled

Medieval Muslim-European Relations: Islamic Juristic Theory and Chancery Practice". From the beginning jurists made a clear distinction between Muslims and dhimmis (non-Muslim subjects) and between the dar al-Islam remains troublesome. At the end of his talk Professor: (territory of Islam) and the dar al-harb (territory of war).



'The Father speaks the Word into the soul, and when the Son is horn, each soul becomes Mary' — Rumi, 13th century Muslim mystic. The illustration is for the 11th century Spanish manuscript Ildefonsus' Treatise on the Virginity of Mary

Dr. Sartain discovered, however, that the ethnic origin of noo-Muslims was irrelevant for medieval legal scholars. Similarly, government officials were not particularly curious about peoples who lived outside the dar al-Islam. In 1412, for example, al Qulqashandi wrote a manual for Egyptian bureaucrats that virtually ignores northern Eu-

"the West," according to Dr. Sartain, are modern. She found no traces of the image of a collective, hostile European "other."
In his lecture "Arab Views of Northern
Europeans in the Middle Ages" Dr. Abdullah agreed that Muslim writers and officials were not generally interested in Europe — the concept of "Europe" did not even exist. Yet by looking at the work of medieval historians and geographers, he was able to uncover negative stereotypes

ropeans. Categories such as "European" or

misconceptions held by westerners. Because of the cold elimate Europeans were thought to be crude, unintelligent, poorly socialised and emotionally insensitive little better than chumb animals with thin skin and massive muscles. The only qual-ities admired in the northerners were their

fighting skills. In their comments on these lectures, Dr. Daniel Vitkus (AUC) and Dr. Samia Mehrez (AUC) suggested that the East-West dichotomy commonly employed by scholars gets in the way of interpreting cross-cultural encounters. Both called for a new theoretical approach, one that takes into ac-count the complex web of attitudes that existed throughout the Mediterranean world. Dr. Vitkus argued for a "post-Saidian" per-

spective, neither Orientalist nor anti-Orientalist, a "more balanced and less reductionist framework for understanding the rich mixture of cultures that made up the Mediterranean". Dr. Mehrez questioned the very title of the conference, suggesting that sessions devoted to "Western Images of Islamic Culture" and "Islamie Images of Europe" pre-determined the attitudes of

both speaker and audience. The final paper, delivered by Dr. Abou-Bakr, focused on "The Religious Other: Christian Images in Sufi Poetry." Like her colleagues, Dr. Abou-Bakr acknowledged that anti-Christian poleunics were common to medieval literature, but went on to demonstrate that Sufism responded positively to Christianity. Focusing on the work of three Sufi poets, Muhyi al-Din Ibn Arabi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and Abu al-Hassan al-Shushtari, she showed that these mysties shared a belief in the Unicity of Being (wahdat al-wujud). Concluding her lecture, Dr. Abou-Bakr retold one of Rumi's parables. It serves as a fitting summation to the student to fetch him a bottle from the next master that there are two bottles, while the teacher insists that he should be able to find

only one. The student decides to smash one of them so that he can bring to his teacher the one bottle he requested. The two bottles, though, disappear, and he

David Blanks is professor of History at the American

o this people a place for congregation

Excerpts from primary sources quoted at the conference.

(Then) there appeared a man of the Arabs...from Mecca or its neighbourhood, whose name was Muharned; and he brought back the worshippers of idols to the knowledge of One God, and bade them declare that Muhamed was his apostle; and his nation were circumcised in the flesh, not by the law... Benjamin I, Patriarch when Alexandria was captured (mid-7th century), from Deno John Geanakopolos, Byzantium. Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes

■ 'In addressing the Byzantine Emperor...the chancery clerk may choose from among such epithets as the Lion...the Pure of Lineage, Heir to the Ancient Caesars, Preserver of the Ways of the Philosophers and Wise Men, Expert in the Matters of his Religion, Just in his Realm, Bastion of Christianity... Defender of Seas and Inlets, King of Kings of the Babylonians, Well-beloved of the Pope, Paragon of Kings and Sultans... and Friend of the Muslims... The Pope of Rome...may be addressed as the Saintly... Exemplar of the Sects of Jesus, He who appoints the Kings of Christianity, Reciter of the Gospels...He who Makes Known what is Licit and Illicit, Friend of Kings and Sultans'.—Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Qalqashandi (1353-1418), Subh Al-A'sha fi Sina'at

"Having paid the expenses themselves, the Lord Mar-shall and the Lord Chamberlaine had the servants (of the ambassador from the Ottoman Empire visiting Loudon in 1640) prepare food 'a la Turkeska,' and then the two Lords, along with 'other great lords,' had a wonderful meal with the messenger, 'so unusual a mesure and man-ner.' Englishmen and Turks sat around the same table, with the highest seat reserved for the Chiaus, 'observing theyr content of appetite.' The Turkish cuisine had arrived in England"-John Finet, 1641, quoted by Mattar

'The Universal Soul came into contact with the individual soul.../ Through that touch on its bosom the soul became pregnant, like Mary, with a heart-heguiling Messiah/...So when the soul has become impregnated by the Soul of soul... the world is impregnated. Then the world gives birth to another world, and displays to this congregated people a place for congrega-tion.../-Jalal al-Din Rumi, 13th century

Sufi mystic and Persian poet, Mathnawi

With his right hand (Saladin) made the sign of the cross over the water, touching the basin in four places and saying: "so far is it from this place unto this as from this unto this." This he said so that it might not be perceived what he was doing. And then he poured the water upon his head and upon his body, uttering therewithal three words in French, which we understood not; but verily it seemed, inasmuch as I could see, that he baptised himself -- Salah al-Din'a fictional uncle in the 13th century Rècits d'un Menèstrel de Reims

I have never heard a singing more terrible than that of the people of Shalshwiq (European city on the Atlantic coast). It is a sound that emerges from their mouths like the barking of dogs or much worse than that '—Zakariya bin Muhammed al-Qizwini, historian and geographer (d. 1283), Athar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al-'Ibad

(Northerners have)... rough manners; their mouths have grown dumb and their toogues have become heavy... (they) are dominated by stupidity, coarseness and savagery and this increases in them as one goes further north'
—Abi al-Hassan al-Masu'di, Arab historian (d 956), al-Tanbih wa ol-Ishraf

Better the turban of the Muslim in the midst of Con-

stantinople than the mitre of the Latin' -15th century Byzantium eburch official, from David Talbot Rice, The Byzantines (New York: 1962)

Tone day as I was in the Alcala of Toledo, a boy came up to sell some notebooks and old papers... (the) characters (of) which I recognised as Arabic... I lonked about to see if there was any Spanish-speaking Morisco at band to read them for me, and I had no difficulty in finding such an individual... When I told him what I wanted and put the book in his hands, he opened it in the middle and read a little... When I

struck with surprise and amazement, for it seemed to me at once that these notebooks contained the history of Don Quixote...I urged him to read the beginning, and he did so, turning the Arabie into Castilian at sight. He told me it meant "History of Don Quixote de la Mancha, written by Cide Hamet Benengeli, an Arab Historian"—Narrator of Cervantes' 1605 novel Don Quixote:

My heart.. is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christians/ And a temple for idols and the pilgrims' Ka'aba and the tahies of the Torah, and the book of the Koran./ I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take this is my religion and my faith'-Muhi al-Din Ibn Arabi, 12th-13th century Sufi mystic and Andalusian philosopher, Tarjuman Al-

heard Dulcinea del Toboso named, I was

The Triumphant Christian Warrior, illustration for Gerona Bea-

the 17th hippant Christian warrant, must alien for Spanish corruption of the Arabic must'arab used for the Arabized Christians of al-Andalus. "At first glance the rider appears to represent a Muslim warrior... Near Eastern representations of royalty show fluttering scarves attached to diadems, while crescents...here

used to decorate the harness, had a religious significance. Yet the traditional—meaning attached to the iconography of a mounted warrior subduing a serpent could be applied by a Christian painter only to Christian forces"—John Williams, Early Spanish

manusript illumination (New York: George Brazillier, 1977) p. 99

Russian, German, Chinese and Slavonic languages, among others) the faculty launched the first post-graduate courses in translation, both written and simultaneous. This is where the Glossary comes in. Part of the translation examination is the prep-

conference: "A teacher asks his squint-eyed room, but the student returns to inform his

sary in hand, a befty tome devoted to the fine arts, is the work of a number of students supervised by Drs Shebl El-Komi and Abdel-Moneim

In the introduction the compilers explain that whereas the term fine arts is traditionally restricted to architecture, painting and sculpture, the glossary takes its cue from modem encyclopaedias in applying the term to encompass music, ballet, opera, design and decorations. The trans-lators' target is to give "the most accurate Arabie equivalent possible for the English terminologies along with detailed explanation to help ... in understanding their usages."

The volume includes a number of illustrations wherever necessary. There are appendices, at the end of the book, which provide detailed information on specific works of art, artistic movements and schools. In the appendix on art, we find full but succinct explanations of such schools as abstract expressionism, cubism, constructivism, futurism, to mention but a few.

This glossary is as comprehensive as is humanly possible. You are as likely to find translations for such words as annuict, bantam work and catshead as banjolin, bell lyra, caryatid and obelisk, violone and quadrige.

There is no doubt that this is a welcome addition to the Egyptian arts library. Though the Glossary is published in a rather simple form, I am lonking forward in seeing it re-issued by one of the leading publishing bouses as a contribution to art appreciation.

Mursi Saad El-Din

Through a prism darkly

John Victor Tolan, keynote speaker at the conference. speaks with Nur Elmessiri about medieval Europe's images of Islam

John Victor Tolan is the author of Petrus Alfonsi and his medieval readers, together with numerous articles on cultural and religious interaction between medieval Christians, Jews and Muslims, and is the editor of Christian perceptions of Islam in the Middle Ages: A collection of essays. He is currently working on a book entitled Saracens: Creation of a polemical image, due to appear in 1997. Of the pre-occupation behind his most recent research, Tolan

"Edward Said's Orientalism is based primarily on the 19th and 20th centuries. The little he has to say about the middle ages is based mostly on Norman Daniels who did an extremely good job at finding medieval Christian texts that dealt with Islam, of presenting what they said about Islam, but who did so largely out of context. While Said is right in the 19th and 20th centuries to talk about the confrontation or interaction between East and West as one of a technologically, militarily superior West con-fronting a technologically and militarily inferior East, I think in many ways in the Middle Ages the situation was reversed. On one hand medieval authors are very aware of their cultural debt to the Muslim world, on the other there is an intimidation, a need to push away the religion and to explain why onomically sophisticated. Hence the many hostile

found in several medieval texts, in which Mohamed was buried in an iron sarcophagus placed in a mosque that had magnets in the ceiling so that the surcophagus floated in mid-air. Europeans thought that Muslims followed Mohamed because be tricked them with his false miracles."

The conference has been attempting to break down binaries. What do you see to be the main approaches, in their varying degrees, to Islam — even if they all tended to be negative? In other words, what kind of changes do you see across time and place?

"It is hard to make geographical generalisations. It often depends on the context of each author, whether he is trying to include the discussion of Islam in a text used by missionaries, or in a history of the world, and so on. In the 13th century the story of Mohamed's ascension was translated from Arabic, first into Spanish, then into Latin, and from Latin into French, and some scholars say that the story of Mohamed's ascension inspired Dante's Divine Comedy. So there is certainly a variation in portrayals of Mohamed. At the same time, in some of the early texts about the First Crusade, in some of the French epics, from the 11th or 12th till the 15th a need to push away as so intellectually and ecthe Muslim world was so intellectually and economically sophisticated. Hence the many hostile
onomically sophisticated. Hence the many hostile
think that Muslims are pagens and Mohamed or
legends about Mohamed. There is even a legend,
Mahomet is the name of a golden idol they worship.

"In Spain you see a distinction between texts written by churchmen, which are going to show at least a certain amount of bostility towards Islam, and the attitudes of your average Christian who was not going to write his ideas down on paper. We have the incident, for example, of the 9th century martyrs movement in Cordova where a number of Christians came forward, vilified Islam publicly, insulted the Prophet, and were put to death for it. A series of 30 or 40 people did the same, actively seeking martyrdom, and were put to death. There are some Latin texts written in defence of these martyrs, implying that they were in fact very unpopular within the Christian community, understandably so because most Christians felt that they had a very good modus vivendi within the Muslim community as a tolerated minority. I think what provoked this movement of martyrs was the fear of assimilation. Christians had slowly, gradually, convened to Islam. Some of the authors of these Latin texts defending the martyrs complain that all Christian Spaniards know Arabic poetry but none of them can read Latin anymore. So there is a fear for one's culture, one's religion, one's identity".

There is a sizable minority of Christians in Palestine and in the Arab world at large. In Israel there is a group of people called "Orieotal Jews", who are actually Arab Jews.

Europe is Christendom. To what extent do you see the desire to believe that Christianity belongs only to Europe and to forget and deny that it came from somewhere else, from where the Muslims currently are and where the Jews were, as part of Europe's identity-formation? In the period during the Arab conquests there were already sharp divisions and different groups. Byzantine writers, subjects of an empire crumbling be-

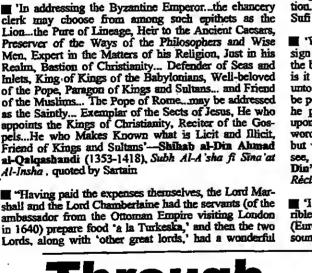
fore the Muslim armies, talk about Mohamed as a wild man, a mad man, a heretic. On the other hand Syriac Christians, who had been persecuted by the Byzantines, were very happy to see the Arabs arrive; some of their texts describe Mohamed as a holy man, Islam as another monotheistic faith and the Muslims as brothers. To jump forward to the crusading period, many of the Western Christians coming to the east were in conflict with the Byzantine Empire and with many of the other indigeonus Christians. There was the horrible massacre in Jerusalem in 1099 of Muslims, Jews and Eastern Christians between whom little distinction seemed to have been made".

Do you see these simplified categories persisting till today. If so, how? "The stereotype that the Arab world is violent wimess Western media coverage of the Gulf War -

But in Europe's narrative of its own history, comes from this long period in which Europe had an inferiority complex towards the Muslim world. As Europe began to colonise parts of the Muslim world from 17th century they brought those stereotypes with them".

> Until the 18th century the average European still believed in miracles, an afterlife, in all kinds of things which at a fundamental, epistemological level remain part of the lives of people in the "Third World". Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism — each incorporating a fundamental belief in the sacred - share important common presuppositions. How has the trend towards secularism in Europe affected understandings of Islam?

"I don't think secularism will necessarily improve the vision of Islam. In some cases, prejudices against Islam are part of anti-clerical anti-religious prejudice. I was struck by what happened in France a few years ago. Many Muslim-French girls wanted to wear headscarves to school and were told they could not because it was a religious symbol. France does have a particularly strong anti-clerical tradition, often directed against the Catholic Church, but in this case directed against Islam. It varies from country to country. That's a kind of problem that is much less likely in the US where there is a clear distinction between the private and public spheres".





The sound of music

who was teaching dancing and music and had put to-gether a little troupe of gifted children. She studied voice and music in college. She was singing in Salome when Joann Grillo and Richard Kaness the cofounders of The Ambassadors heard her in Palm Beach. They hired her and she went on tour with them to the Middle East several times. This year The

TRADITIONALLY opera singers are stout, middle aged ladies whose voice is supposed to make you forget their appearance. There are however more and more exceptions to the rule: Sheryl Pesdan is one of them. Young, blond and beautiful, she was born in Chicago where she studied the piano and dancing at an early age, encouraged by her mother who may teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make teaching darking and music and had put to make the call was to make you popular with the young Egyptian and expat public gave an exclusive performance at the Cairo Sheraton. Sherly sang "Quando m'invo" from La Bo-heme, "Io son I'umile ancilla" from Adriana Lecourreur, arise from Madame Butterfly and "In quantum to make you popular with the young Egyptian and expat public gave an exclusive performance at the Cairo Sheraton. Sherly sang "Quando m'invo" from La Bo-heme, "Io son I'umile ancilla" from Adriana Lecourreur, arise from Madame Butterfly and "In quantum to make you popular with the young Egyptian and expat public gave an exclusive performance at the Cairo Sheraton. Sherly sang "Quando m'invo" from Adriana Lecourreur, arise from Madame Butterfly and "In quantum to make young Egyptian and expat public gave an exclusive performance at the Cairo Sheraton. Sherly sang "Quando m'invo" from La Bo-heme, "Io son I'umile ancilla" from Adriana quantum to make young Egyptian and expat public gave an exclusive performance at the Cairo Sheraton. public really warmed up when we did numbers from popular musicals such as West Side Story. "It is the same wherever we go," she says. Musical theatre is a winner everywhere. Sheryl who was looking forward to a full Middle East tour has had to leave for New York to sing next week at Carnegie Hall "Part of the fun, says Sheryl, is travelling with the troupe."



Ves all survival Project is committed to reducing child mortality and providing quality health care for children. David Snipes reports

First envisioned in the mid-'80s, the Child

After reviewing a series of reports on the state of health care available for Egyptian children, the Ministry of Health determined that a large proportion of children's deaths and illness were preventable. Ministry officials concluded that expanding already existing programmes, creating new ones and consolidating them into one project was the best solution to upgrading child health care. Representatives of Egypt and the United States met on 15 August, 1985 to sign an agreement establishing the Child Survival Project (CSP) with s tem-year budget. The Egyptian government allotted \$34 million and the US, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), allocated another \$68 million to the project.

Inaugurated in 1988 under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, working in cooperation with USAID and the World Health Organisation, the CSP has overseen a dramatic decrease in pre-ventable deaths while improving the health and quality of life for children.

"The health of children and the leading causes of death were reviewed and identified and we decided to find solutions that best addressed the interests and needs of the Egyptian people," Dr Esmat Man-sour, executive director of the CSP, told Al-Ahram Weekly. The leading causes of child mortality were identified as the high incidence of communicable diseases, acute respiratory infections and diarrhearelated diseases from a variety of causes. High birth rates with short intervals between pregnancies coupled with mainutrition aggravate an already high incidence of disease.

Egypt has over 10 million children under the age of six, accounting for nearly 20 per cent of the population. Yet child mortality accounts for 40 per cent of total annual deaths in the country. Approximately 100,000 infants were dying within their first year and a further 500,000 children did not survive to reach their fifth birthday before the

CSP began, Utilising the knowledge gained in their respective fields, the experts at CSP developed s national pro-

gramme targeting specific problems. Departments were set up under the headings Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI), Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), and Collid Spacing and Maternal and Child Health (CS/MCH).

The CSP tapped into the extensive infrastructure of the Ministry of Health's primary health care system to improve the health of Egyptian children and mothers. Upgrading the training of physicians, muses and district health officers, ensuring ad-

equate drug supplies and technical support are key elements in CSP's national programme. In recognition of the Child Survival Project's suc-cess in the improvement of the health of children and women the Egyptian government has twice been awarded the United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize, in 1990 and 1994, presented at the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Geneva headquarters. The prize is awarded to countries in the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region for achievements in the reduction of health problems. Egypt, which first won the prize for its successful control of diarrhoeal diseases, received its second in March 1995 for its immunisation programme and its efforts to reduce maternal mortality.

while CSP's other two components were well es-tablished within the Ministry of Health prior to the project's inception, ARI began operations from scratch within the ministry in 1986. Acute res-piratory illnesses, the leading cause of death among children under five, affect 8.5 million children annually. "In 1989 when we began operations at CSP, respiratory illnesses were responsible for 35 per cent of all deaths in one- to five-year-olds, and 33 per cent of all infant mortality," Dr Nagwa Khallaf, executive director of the ARI component at the Child Survival Project told the Weekly. "Today, 85 per cent of the population is reached by the ARI programme and these deaths bave been reduced to under 30 per cent, but we must still lower these numbers significantly."

Data compiled by ARI researchers have shown that children in urban population areas suffer be-

tween five to eight episodes of respiratory illnesses of varying degrees per year. In rural areas the figure is three to five episodes per year. ARI in Egypt can have dire consequences, according to Dr Khallaf. Bacterial pneumonia is the leading cause of death for children under five — nearly 11 infants out of 1,000 and 4 per 1,000 of one- to five-year-olds died 1,000 and 4 per 1,000 of one- to inve-year-olds died from it in 1990. ARIs are estimated, in USAID reports, to contribute to the deaths of 10,000 to 25,000 persons in Cairo alone annually, the highest number seen in any of the world's mega-cities.

Recognising that mothers were the advance line in the detection of illness, ARI conducted ethers were the strength of the conducted ethers and the conducted ethers.

nographic studies in an effort to better understand how mothers perceived and named the different symptoms of respiratory infections. The results were useful in designing one-on-one and mass me-dia health education. Early recognition and treat-ment are important factors in preventing illnesses from progressing and becoming life threatening. Of all children born in Egypt, 70 per cent are de-livered at home. Many of these births are attended

by dayas (midwives). The reasons for the preference for home delivery are multi-fold: local custom, family tradition, distrust in hospitals and elinics, lack of transport and distance are all factors. While most births are without incident, in the cases where complications arise a birth attendant who can recognise early signs is essential to the welfare of both child and mother. A study carried out by CSP entitled the "National Maternal Mortality Study" concluded that 92 per cent of maternal deaths "had one or more avoidable factors." This point is emphasised in the case study of a women who began hemorrhaging after giving birth. The women was transported, after s delay, to a hospital which, as is often the case, had inadequate blood supplies and the "obstetrician asked the busband to buy two units of blood... the busband searched among many hospitals until he found the correct blood group... when he returned to the hospital his wife had died." In 1993 the national maternal mortality rate stood

at 174 deaths per 100,000 live births. The CS/MCH

component under executive director Mustafa El-Qassas initiated the training of dayas in basic health practices as part of the first step to reduce infant and maternal mortality. Over 80 per cent of the countries 15,000 dayas have been trained in addition to neonatal nurses, unitologists, primary care doctors and obstetricians. CS/MCH places heavy emphasis on the health of mothers. The health of the mother is more important than the child," says El-Kassas; "it is she who can best look after the welfare of the child and reduce the likelihood of a

weifare of the child and reduce the likelihood of a difficult birth by seeking antenatal care."

Following World Health Organisation-recommended guidelines, developed in the campaign to eradicate smallpox worldwide, the Child Survival Project's EPI component has made significant advances in immunisation coverage. Adhering to the same basic strategy as the other project components — community ethication, healthcare worker training, adequate and quality immunisation supplies and technical support — EPI has isation supplies and technical support — EPI has reached nearly 90 per cent of the immunisation target, one of the world's highest coverage rates. Hepatitis B, which is responsible for 20,000 deaths annually, is the most recent disease added to the list of six others tackled by EPI. Besides benatitis B, which in Egypt is primarily acquired in childbood, the programme immunises against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, tuberculosis and polio. "The EPI component has been highly successful, particularly in our goal to eradicate the poliomyelitis virus", said Dr Ahmed Darwish, executive director of EPI. "The number of polio cases has dropped from 120 in 1994 to 16 cases in the first six months of this year." first six months of this year."

Though there has been a marked improvement in child health care through the efforts of the Child Survival Project, there remains considerable room for improvement. But with the support of the Egyptian Ministry of Health, WHO, and USAID the staff at CSP and other health-care providers will continue, in the words of Dr Mansour, "to ensure the best future for our children".



Mulling over malls

"Malls are not just shopping centres," said Walter. "They are a way of life." We were driving past the new mall in Maadi and throngs of youngsters were going into, coming out of or just milling about the hideous, bright yellow edifice. They all looked like mall people, the kind you only see there and nowhere else.

There was a time when the young walked the streets romantically stooped over the piles of books they clutched, clothed in an aura of fashionable angst, playing at being lonely in the crowd. Now it seems that they do the same thing but in groups, and up and down escalators.

One could be led to believe at first that their depressed demeanour is brought about by frus-trated consumerism. A second look will inform the observer that they hardly ever glance at the shop windows. They are at the mall to imbibe the gaudy houry, the loud music, and generally to enjoy the pseudo-camival atmosphere which permeates the air like the smell of burning hot

My husband discovered malls when he was in his fifties, and to make up for lost time instantly became a mall freak. There are many historical landmarks we missed in Paris, London, Geneva, Milan, Montreal and Sydney, but we never failed to visit the mails. As far as he was concerned, a day at the mall beat one at the Prado hands down. He wasn't even there on shopping sprees. Actually, he tended to buy locally. But somehow malls beckoned to him wherever we were and he had a knack for discovering new ones no matter how remote and out of the way.

Weekends were often devoted to mall hopping. He would go in and out of shops, noting trivial details that did not have a chance of ever coming in handy. He knew which mall stocked the best brands of orange-flavoured tea (he drank his tea plain); he remembered where one could buy an impressive number of items that no one around us could afford; and he could instantly tell you on which floor of this or that mall you could find men's shoes for over \$500.

He also developed what I have come to call the mall syndrome, a disease which makes one forget the people around one, including one's own family, dragged along on every mail mar-athen. On one occasion we were driving home with the children when he spotted a sign in-dicating that a shopping mall could be found in the vicinity. Before I could protest and bring to his attention the fact that the baby was asleep, he had slipped the car neatly into a parking space. "Just two minutes, please. I'll be back before you know it," he said, eyes already

We sat in the car and waited. I toyed with the idea of driving home but he had the car keys. He also had the money. So I sat and waited ... and waited. The baby was hollering, expressing certain precise, pressing needs. It was way past her meal-time, My-older daughter did her utmost to drive me crazy. She was hungry, then hungry and tired and finally just tired. Still there was no sign of my husband.

In the end I decided to go look for him. The padding lat was expectably deceased. I outlined

parking lot was practically deserted. I gathered my two children and headed for the elevator. But search as I may, he was nowhere to be found. I began to look for an attendant, but how usual to lose a child in a mall, but a husband? "Daddy is late because he went to the pub," my daughter was chanting, aping some of her more objectionable schoolmates. Your daddy does not go to the pub," I said sternly. She did not seem convinced.

"Are you and daddy getting a divorce?" she asked. That was too much. I started sobbing. The baby promptly joined in. "I knew it," said my daughter. "All my best friend' parents are divorced." I was losing it rapidly. "We are not getting a divorce, now please be quiet," I finally shricked, sorry I had ever listened to Dr Spock. Suddenly my husband was with us, beaming with pleasure. "Isn't it a wonderful place?" he was saying. "Unfortunately it's almost closing time. I was just looking for the manager to tell him that this pace should remain open 24 hours a day. I felt that spoiling his pleasure would be mean, so I followed him in silence to the car. "Daddy," asked our daughter in her sweetest manner, "when you and minmy get s divorce, can I come and live with you here?"

Fayza Hassan

The environment of infertility developing nations where safeguards take a back seat to industrial growth. Reem Leila looks into the linkages

Pollution and infertility come hand in hand, especially in

drink polluted water on a daily basis, says Dr Shafika Nasser, professor of Community Medicine st Cairo University. "If the water isn't very polluted, it simply decreases their fertility rate."

When we drink polluted water and these dissolved toxins are ingested into the body, "they interfere with the normal interaction between the brain hypothalamic centres, the pituitary gland and the seminiferous [seed-bearing] tubules inside the testes," says Dr Kamal Zaki, professor of Andrology at Cairo University. "Because these parts are very sensitive and have complicated functions, the final outcome is a severe reduction in sperm density, which leads to

The journey pollutants take from their source to our bodies is quite straightforward. We inhale them, absorb them through skin contact or more directly, through food and drink. Among the pollutants typical of developing countries are pesticides used in agriculture and industrial waste.

Pollutants might also be self-inflicted, like the kind we inhale when smoking a cigarette. There are over 4,000 compounds present in tobacco smoke, many of which are proven to be toxic and to cause cancer and mutations. "Smoking affects the ovulation of women because it causes vasoconstriction [narrowing] of the ovarian blood vessels, which reduces the ovulation rate. It also reduces the quantity of menstrual blood, which leads to infertility or increased infant mortality," says Dr. Nabil Yunis, professor of Obstetrics and Gynaccology at Al-

When pregnant women smoke, their developing embryos are involuntarily

Water, like air or soil, is a superb medium for the transportation and chemical transformation of pollutants — it even speeds up chemical reactions among dissolved substances, like sewage, industrial waste and acid rain (a mixture of sulphuric and nitrie acids).

Both men and women can become infertile within three to five years if they birth, low birth weight for babies and retarded development.

Radiation is considered one of the most dangerous types of pollutants. Experts say their effect extends to the third generation of those exposed. "X-rays affect the sexual cells of men and women, if they are directly exposed to them. These rays cause vasoconstriction of the ovarian blood vessels and may also cause miscarriage," says Dr. Yunis. "These rays also rupture the membrane which leads to difficult deliveries." Electro-magnetic waves emitted by computer screens also affect pregnant women who experience difficult pregnancies. If exposed to the waves for long intervals of time, the probability of miscarriage, breast cancer and disfigurement of the baby is increased, says

Infertility is not only spurred by pollutants. There are certain types of hormones, such as estrogen, that are injected into animals for tastier and fattier tissues. "The molecules of estrogen hormones remain inside animal tissues, muscles and organs, which are consumed by man," says Zaki. "Such hormones interfere with the cormal physiology of the testes as it causes vasoconstriction of the testes' blood vessels, which leads to infertility or sterility. It also inter-

feres with the normal physiology of brain centers, and the endocrine."

And pollutants can cause health problems other than infertility by sffecting numerous organs in the body. Once inhaled and absorbed into the bloodstream, "airborne lead, benzine and carbon monoxide from car exhausts and cigarette smoke cause nervous disorders and kidney damage leading to high blood pressure," says Cairo University's Dr Shafika Nasser.



Allergic to cats? . So what!

Sufra Dayma

Baked kofta and potatoes

Ingredients: 1/2 kg. minced meat kg. potatoes 2 onions (one grated + bunch parsley leaves (finely chopped) 4 tbsp. tomato paste 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice l beef bouillon cube Salt + pepper + allspice + grated

Method: Coat an oven pan with butter, then mix the meat with the grated onion, the parsley, the lemon juice and the spices. Spread this kofta blend in the pan so as to be of one cm. in thickness. In a cooking pan, make s tomato sauce with the chopped onion, the tomato paste, the beef bouillon, some water, then season. In the meantime while it cooks, peel the potatoes, slice them round, then wash them under running water to get rid of the starch. Place them on top of the kofta, then pour over them the tomato sauce, enough to level with the potato slices; (the kofta will release some liquid as well). Cover with aluminium foil and bake in medium oven heat. Remove the foil sheet to golden the top of the pan, 20 minutes before it completely cooks; (do not dry the sauce). Serve hot with white rice

Moushira Abdel-Malek

Restaurant review

Starry starry night

Nigel Ryan lunches beneath the midnight blue

The ceiling of Arabesque is painted mid-night blue, punctuated by the occasional gold star. There is a marble fountain that gurgles as discreetly as the piano cocktails that trickle from hidden speakers. Arabesque is a very civilized kind of place. The midnight blue and gold may sound a trifle louche. It is not. The interior is almost achieved. ingly tasteful. Brocades, mashrabiva, an art gallery for a foyer, and the gentle gurgle gur-

I like Arabesque. It is cool and uncluttered. It is so middle aged that it makes me feel young. It is proper, with folded napkins and the kind of deferential staff you can imagine

turning just s mite snooty if provoked.

Neatly tucked away in Qasr El-Nil Street,
just a stone's throw from Midan Tahrir, it is the perfect place to escape the burly burly of the city's pavements. The air conditioning purrs silently at the highest setting, creating a refrigerated oasis in the heart of town. In the evenings it can become crowded though at lunch times it is remarkably peaceful. You will recognise the entrance by its frame of

polychromatic tiles. The menu is a constant. It has been the same now for several years, which suggests less laziness than a recognition of the dangers of meddling with something that has found favour with a great many customers. We began with an order of merze Arabesque, which included stuffed vine leaves, kofta, chicken livers, sambousak and goujons of sea bass. The chicken livers were exceptionally good, sautéed until tender and not for a moment longer. The kofta -- tiny balls of minced lamb — was fine. I confess to having reservations about goujons of sea

bass — the idea of producing strips from such a meatily textured fish seems ex-traordinary though they were perfectly pre-sentable. The sambousak were less so. Despite a decently spiced filling, the pastry tasted papery in that underdone file way.

Entrees proved a little confusing. I had ordered the non too specific poisson prov-ençale, my partner the more precise cre-vettes et loup de mer bonne femme gratinée. Only when my fish arrived it was totally undressed, boasting a sauce neither from Pro-vence nor anywhere else. My parmer had fared better, and got what he ordered.

Now of course, in such a situation the thing to do is to send back the dish. There has simply been a little misunderstanding. And the staff at Arabesque are professional enough not to bat an eyelid. But the fact is that the unadorned fish looked absolutely fine, it came with green rice, and suddenly realised that was really what I had wanted. So I did not send it back, and thoroughly enjoyed what was later listed on the bill as the

equally none specific poisson grillė

The prawns and loup de mer were also enjoyable — one of the perks of restaurant reviewing is that you are obliged to pick from the plates of fellow diners and from beneath the slightly heavy sauce I dutifully picked a prawn or two. Fresh and fishy, what more C2II you ask.

The above, together with two soft drinks and a bottle of mineral water, came to just under LE150. I was tempted to linger over a coffee but did not.

Arabesque. 6, Qasr El-Nil Street, Downtown. Tel: 57 48 677/ 57 47 898

Al-Ahram Weekly Crossword

By Samia Abdennour

ACROSS . Poke; provocative (4) . Fixed idea (4) 9. Equine animal, pl. (5) 14. Comb. form for "air" (4) 15. Reverberation (4) 16. harden (5)

17. Praise (4) 18. Poetic contraction (4) 19. ... days = one's time of 20. Member of ancient Jewish sect (6) 22. Convene (4)

24. ltinerary abbreviations (3) 25. Orderly (4) 27. Wife's sibling (7) 29. Stirs (8) 33. Metric unit of square measure (3) 34. Perimeter (3)

35. Enslave (6) 37. Pitcher (4) 41. Conflict (5) 43. After the manner of, 2 wds



44. Angry (5)
45. Ditto (4)
46. Layered (6)
48. Weather directions (3)
49. Biblical high priest (3)
51. Foundation: platform (8) 53. Acrobat's need (7)

(4) 58. 4 down (3) 59. Accidental small cut (4) 61. African fly (6) Open air public pool (4) 69. Regimen (4) 70. Climbing and twining plant, ex clematis (5) 71. Male ant (4)

57. Upper layer of earth's crust

72. Mirth (4) 73. Mislays (5) 74. Scores (4) 75. Wapitis (4) DOWN

1. Auction (4) Garbanzo et al (4) 3. Bison; wisent (4) 4. Animal with strong incisors and no canine teeth (5) 5. In manner unworthy of (7) 6. Floe (3) 7. Expression to call attention Ulcerations; hurts (5)

9. Esquire (6) 10. Miscellaneous facts (3) 11. Principles (5) 12. Muse of lyric poetry (5)

13. Describing a certain automobile (5) 21. Poetic for 5 Down (5) 23. And others, L. 2 wds (4) 26. Wide-brimmed felt hat worn in sub-tropical regions (5) 28. Equal (4) 29. Bows (4)

30. ... monster = type of poisonous lizard (4) 31. Muslim caller to prayer (4) 32. Nutritive starch meal (5) 36. Ancient Roman household deities (5) 38. Require (4) 39. Small spirit stove (4)

60. Cows (4) 62. Money receptacle behind counter (4) 63. Look around for (4) 64. French summers (4) 66. Weather directions (3) 68. Niche (3)

44. Concepts (5)

47. Redactors (7)

down slopes (6)

54. Broadcast (5)

56. Brilliance (5)

55. A Titan (5)

50. Binoculars (6)

46. ... Ouzou, Algeria (4)

52. Small vehicle for sliding

53. Sing in quavering manner

* Head Onk * Netscoppide O SA BANK Ace I and

40. Bobbin (4)

42. Ooze (4)

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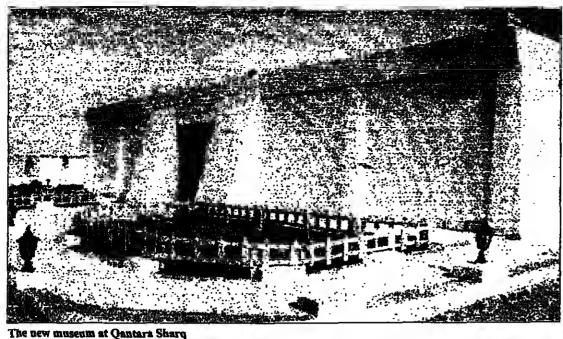
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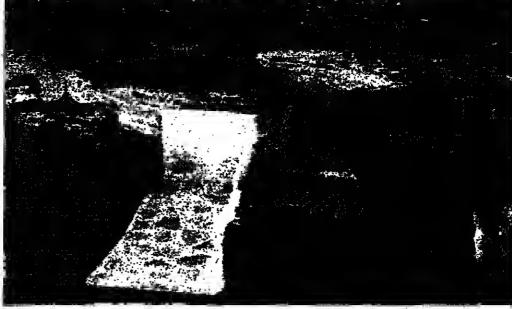
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Ruin of the newly-discovered citadel

Ancient north Sinai uncovered

Northern Sinai has become an archaelogical centre. An ancient citadel is the latest in a series of discoveries, and a centre covering the history of the area is to open soon. Nevine El-Aref explores

Recent excavations at El-Oantara Sharo in Sinai have unearthed the area's first Ptolemaic monument, a citadel, dating to the age of Ptolemy IV. The impressive structure is 600 metres long, 300 metres wide, with walls 15 metres thick. A cache of 500 bronze coins has been discovered beneath the citadel, together with precious stones, weapons and pottery shards. And in the surrounding area, silos, stables, store rooms, a dormitory for soldiers and houses have been unearthed.

This is an important discovery," commented Mohamed Abdel-Maqsoud, director-general of Sinai antiquities. From the excavations, he added, it could he deduced that the citadel was used as a customs and tolls station for the eastern part of the Delta. The structure also reveals new information on Egyptian military architecture and on the history of northern Sinai in general. Three other citadels found in the area date back to the Pharaonic, Roman and Hyksos periods.

"This latest discovery supports the bypothesis that El-Qantara Sharq was Egypt's eastern gateway to the Delta, and that it played a vital part in commercial and military relations between Egypt and the countries of the eastern Mediterranean," Abdel-Maqsoud explained.

The discovery is the latest in an archaeological salvage operation begun over five years ago when work began on the El-Salam Canal project, designed to channel fresh water from the Damietta branch of the Nile under the Suez Canal to feed a large subsidiary canal running across northern Sinai.

This canal will carry water to irrigate land as far as the plain of El-Arish, and will eventually allow 400,000 fed-dans to be put under cultivation. The first, and ricbest, archaeological area it will traverse is that crossing the El-Tina Valley east of El-Qantara and Port Said and extending to the south of Lake Bardawil.

Because the region was largely unexplored, archaeologically speaking, the authorities realised that there was a high risk of losing important parts of the cul-

tural beritage if special action was not taken.

While the government initiated the North Sinai Archaeological Salvage Project, the Ministry of Irrigation cooperated with the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) in the planning of the canal: To conserve the monuments around Salam Canal from drainage water, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and the Ministry of Irrigation have taken all the oecessary precautions, even to the extent of changing the planned route of the canal." Abdel-Magsoud explained.

And, as part of the Sinai Development Project, the SCA is due to opeo the first educational and scientific institute for the history of north Sinai, the Centre for Sinai

"The centre will be an important means of making information accessible to scholars, and to the public," said Abdel-Maqsoud. Built in the shape of a Pharaonic temple on an area of 1,500 square metres, the centre, he explained, comprises three buildings. The first is a residential unit for students and lecturers, the second a library cootaining more than 20,000 archaeological books and documentary films, and the third contains lecture and reception halls. There is also a studio where coloured slides showing the development of ancient Egyptian ar-

chitecture will be oo display.

In addition, the centre will feature a museum of Sinai artefacts, including pottery from different ages and objects excavated during the Israeli occupation and later returned to Egypt.

According to Abdel-Halim Noureddin, secretary-general of the SCA, the aim of the centre is to provide practical training as well as academic studies in the fields of restoration, excavation, and documentation, for both academics and students.

Meanwhile, the North Sinai Archaeological Salvage Project is now well under way. Numerous foreign archaenlogical missions are now participating in the project, either directly or by offering to undertake studies and surveys, cootribute money or equipment, or send draftsmen, architects and archaeologists. Foreign countries joining the Egyptian team in the field oow include USA, France, Germany, Poland and Canada, and work is currently in progress at 20 different sites.

The Egyptian team, assisted by more than 200 labourers on three daily shifts, are working on both restoration and excavation projects in an attempt to open up new tourist destinations along the ancient road from El-Qantara Sharq to Rafah, known as the "Way of Horus". The Way of Horus, explained Abdel-Magsoud, was

used by commercial expeditions trading between Egypt and the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean. At points aloog this route stood fortresses, which housed army garrisons, royal couriers and trademen, as well as supplies of food and water for travellers. These fortresses were first mentioned in ancient Egyptian literature as far back as 2100 BC.

The archaeologists' job is not easy. Excavations in northern Sinai are ootoriously difficult, as most of the sites lie on salt flats or in mud. But, oevertheless, nearly 50 different sites have been identified in the area, which was heavily occupied in Graeco-Roman and Byzantine times, since the start of the salvage opera-

Among the discoveries in the last two years are a huge brick fortress with three entrances, an ancient barrage, a 2km-long dyke from Pelusian, columns on the site of a great amphitheatre, skeletons of crocodiles, Roman baths with exquisite mosaics, a Byzantine church, and massive stone quays at Mohamediyah, the ancient port of Gercha, the oldest oo the Nile Delta's most easterly branch.

How to get there

Super Jet stations are located in Almana (Heliopolis). Talurir, Giza, Ramsis Street and Cairo Airport. Busen travel to Alexandria, Port Sald, Harghada and Stual. Tel.

Cairo-Alexandria
Services almost every half hour
from 5.38am to 10pm, from Tabric, then Giza, Almara and the airport. Taclets LE19 until 9pm;
LE21 thereafter, from the sisport
LE24 mmil 5pm; LE30 thereafter,
A VIP bus with phone access
leaves Almaza at 7.15am. Tickets
from Almaza LE28; from the airnort LE32, each way. port LE32 each way.

Cairo-Port Said Services every hal Services every half hour from 6am to 8am; then 9am, 18am, 3pm, and 4.30pm, from Ahmez, then Ranisis Street. Tickets LE15 each

Alexandria-Port Said
Service 6.45ann, from Ramleh
Square in Alexandria. Departs Port
Said 3.38pm. Tickets LE22 each

Carro-Hurghada
Services Sam and 2pan, from Tairir, them Gizz and Almaza. Departs
Hurghada neon and Span. Tickers
LE40 until 5pan, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Alexandria-Hurghada Service 8pm, from Ramleh Square, Alexandria. Departs Hurghada 2.30pm. Tichett LE60 cach way. Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh Service Hum, from Tahrit, then Almaza. Departs Sharm El-Shaikh: Hum. Tickets LES0 each way.

East Deitz Bus Company Buses travel to north Sinci, south Sinai, Sues and Ismailia. Buses to Ismailla and Suez depart from Qu-lati (near Ramsis Square), Almana and Tagrid Square (near He-Ropolis), Buses to north and south Stati depart from the Stati bass section at Almana, Samuel Tal. Sinai depart from the Sinai bus station at Abbassiya Square. Tel. 482-4753.

Cairo-Ismailia
Services every 45 minutes from
6.38am to 6pm, from Quieli, then
Ahmaza and Tagnid Square. Tickeer deluxe bus LE5.75; airconditioned bus LE5.25, one way.

Cairo-Suez Services every half an hour from Sam to Tpm, from Quali, then Al-man and Tagnid Square. Ticket, deluze bus LES.75; conditioned bus LES, one way. ed bus LES, one

Cairo-El-Arish
Services every how from 7.38am
to 4pm, from Quleli, then Almaza and Tagnid Square. Tickets deluce bus LE21; sir-conditioned bus LE13, one way.

Caino-Sharm El-Sheikh Services every 45 min. from 7am to 6.30pm from Abbassiya, then Alman. Tickets morning LE27; evening LE40, one way. Cairo-Nuweiba.

Service Sam, from Abbassiya, then. Almaza. Tickers deluxe bus LE31.

Stations at Tahrir and Almazo. Tel. 243–1846. Cairo-Hurghada Services 9am, noon, 3pm, 10.39pm, 10.45pm and 11pm. Tickets LE30 one way.

Cairo-Safaga Services 9 am and 3pm. Tickets LE35 one way. Cairo-Ousseir

Service 19pm. Tickets LE38 one way.

Cairo-Luxor Service 9am. Tickets LE35 one Cairo-Aswan
Service 5pm. Tickets LES0 one

Trains

Trains run to Alexandria, Port Said, Luxor and Assoun, from Ramsis Sta-tion. Tel. 147 or 575-3555. Cairo-Luxor-Aswan

"French" deluxe trains with Services to Luxor and Aswan 7.40pm and 9pm (reaching Luxor 6.40 am and 58m, Aswan 8.40am and 10am). Telest to Luxor LE294 for foreigners and LE299 for Egyptians, to Aswan 1.E300 for foreigners; LE141 for Egyptians.

Spanish" deluxe trains with "Spanish" deluxe trains with alecpers
Services to Luxor and Aswan 6.45pm, 8.45pm and 9.45pm.
Tickets to Luxor fint class LE51; second class LE31. Tickets to As-wan; first class LE63; second class LE37.

Cairo-Alexandria
"Torbini" trains
VIP train: Service Sam. Tickets,
finst class LE32 with a meal;
LE22 without a meal.
Standard trains: Services 9am.
11am. moon. Spin and 7pm. Tick-

11 am, noon, 5pm and 7pm. ets first class LEZZ; second LEI7. "French" trains

Services hourly from fain to 10.30pm. Tickets first class LECE; second class LE12.

Cairo-Port Said
Services 6.20am and 8.45am. Tickets first class LE45; second class
LR26.

<u>EgyptAir</u>

There are between two and five domestic flights daily. Check BgyptAir: Adhy 390-0999; Opera 390-2444; or Hilton 759-9806. Cairo-Aswan
Tickets LE300 for

MEMTA date

THE FIRST general meeting of the Middle East Mediterranean Travel and Tourist Association (MEMITA) will take place in June in Tunis, Tunisia was choseo as the group's official headquarters at a preparatory meeting of the third economic summit of the Middle East and North African countries recently held in Rome.

MEMTTA is one of the associations that emerged from the peace process in the Middle East. It aims at supporting and developing the tourist industry in the region, and encouraging cooperation between the countries tovolved. Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, the Palestinian National Authority, Turkey, Cyprus and Israel are already members, and Oman, Qatar and Malta have applied to join.

THE World Tourism Organizatioo's report stated that Soain ousted the United States as the world's oumber two destination for international tourists in 1995, while France remained in first place. Among the top earners of international toursim reveoues, Italy closed in on France for the oumber two spot, earning \$27 billion in tourist receipts. The United States remained the world's top tourism earner and 1995 also marked the first time that China has ranked among the top ten tourism carners. Egypt. has its work cut out to keep in the picture.



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Menouria Office (Shebin El Koum): 233382-233523-233522

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Ultra-sonic treatment from the Fifth Dynasty - over 4.000 years old --- and are ex-

statues of King Pepi I and his ceptionally well preserved, son Merinre are being saved from rust and corrosion, rethey still suffer from the ravports Nevine El-Aref.
"Pepi's son is already being tended to," said Mohamed ages of time. Restorers from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Anoquities (SCA) and the German Restoration and Main-Saleh, director general of the tenance Centre (GRMC) began last week to clean the surfaces of Merinre with dry ultra-sonic

Egypoan Museum, "and Pepi l is awaiting his turn." Though Pepi 1 and the smaller statue of his son hail equipment.

The lavishly illustrated British Museum Dictionary

of Ancient Egypt by Ian Shaw and Paul Nicholson is

now on the Egypoan market. With 420 illustrations, among them 170 io colour, as well as 70 maps, plans

and line drawings, the dictionary covers every aspect of life in ancient Egypt. Here, in a single publication, is the most accurate and up-to-date information avail-

The range is enormous. At ooe end, there are such

details as how the ancient Egyptians brewed their

beer, huilt their houses and even about the games their

children played. At the other, are current information

on archaeological missions: where they are working

and what they bave discovered. Even more important-

ly, each entry is followed by a sbort hihliography

which enables readers to pursue topics to greater de-

Such a book, the first comprehensive and reliable

general dictionary on ancient Egypt currently available in English, is vitally important in this age of tech-

nology. With easy access to literally mountains of material, many young scholars unwittingly draw on

outdated source material and errors have a habit of

propagating themselves. This publication not only

helps standardise English spellings of ancient times,

but informs us that such an oft-repeated phrase as "the

Travellers' book guide

cast metal, hammered with copper nails over hollow wooden cores. The kilt and headdress were added on separately, probably made with a plaster base and perhaps gild-ed. The eyes are inlaid.

Pepi I and Merinre were discovered in the late 1900s buried under the flagstones of a chapel in the temple of Hier-

democratisation of the afterlife" is a misnomer

non" is surely another. There was

only one Colossus of Memnoo, the

northern statue, so described by

early Greek visitors to Egypt. Therefore, the entry should surely

companion".

not "T".

have read "Colossi of Thebes",
"Colossi of Amenholep II", or
"Colossus of Memnon and its

There are more than 600 ex-

tensively cross-referenced and

comprehensively-indexed entries. I

chanced upon one error, minor but annoying. Interested to see how

the ancient Hyksos capital was described, I looked up "Avaris" which wroogly referenced me to "Tell el Dah'a", instead of "Dab'a,

Tell el-". The entry was in "D",

The Dictionary of Ancient

Egypt is not only a reference tool,

it is a picture book with quality

photographs, concise and

A German-Egyptian team restores the oldest copper statues ever found in Egypt akonpolis near Edfu, in southmummics were earlier restored.

em Egypt.
The two statues originally stood side by side on a single base before being dismantled and buried, the soo inside the

father. Usually on display oo the ground floor of the Egyptian Museum, their temporary bome is the museum la-

boratory, where the museum's



MUSEUM DICTIONARY 2= OF -1

A mine of information on ancient Egypt formative maps and plans, and a text which is a joy to

a problematic and controversial topic clearly. Under "flies", one learns why these insects were fashioned into bonorific awards. And, if not put off by such an entry as "Fara'in. Tell el-", one can learn that the semi-mythical predynastic capital of Lower Egypt, the counterpart of Upper Egypt, was a reality and has been discovered.

Abdel-Halim Noureddin

secretary-general of the SCA

said the equipment provided

by the Germans will be given

to the museum after comple-

tioo m six months. Egyptian

metalwork restoration spe-cialists will learn new Eu-

ropean techniques and train

in the use of laser rays.

From "art" to "ethics", "or-acles", "race", "taxation", "wine" and "women", here is everything you ever wanted to know about ancient Egypt.

The British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt is published by the British Museum Press and is available at the American University in Cairo Bookstore and all major bookshops. LE150. Reviewed by Jill Kamil.

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Goal grad



Egypt dominates African squash

Egypt dominated the first All Africa Squash Championship, held in Cairo last week, an event which produced some unexpected results, as Eman Abdel-Moeti reports

Egypt's titans of squash clashed at last week's All Africa Squash Championships at Cairo Stadium's squash courts, with some surprising results. Sixtyfive players from eight countries took part in the individual event, which ended with an all-Egyptian final between Ahmed Barada, world junior champion and placed at 37 in the world rankings, and Egyptian champion Amir Wagih, ranked 23 in the world.

Despite Barada'a reputation for determination and perseverence no one had really predicted that he would be able to overcome Wagih's formidable game. But signs that Wagih was not on top form were apparent in the semi-finals. His victory over Ahmed Faizy was not an easy one. Wagih elearly lacked his usual zeal, and the coach only managed to beat his junior player with a score 9-

Wagih's performance in the final against Barada

was a disappointment to all. Missing too many chances and making little effort to score, be seemed to hand the continental title to Barada on a silver platter. "I can't deny that Barada played better," admitted Wagih after the match. "I wasn't in shape because I've spent the last few months coaching the junior team for the World Junior

Championship in July, rather than training." Barada's victory was not the only surprise. The women's competition suffered a hlow when the Nigerian and South African teams withdrew at the last minute, leaving only Egypt and Namibia to compete. Having only two teams meant that the event lost its official status, because, as African federation President Mahmoud Barakat explained, "African federation rules stipulate that official events must include at least four teams," However, he continued, "We decided not to cancel it altogether because the Namibian team had travelled

all the way to Egypt."

To add a more competitive edge, Egypt entered two teams, but in the midst of the debate over whether or not to hold the competition at all, many players had understandably lost enthusiasm.

Once again, the final was an all-Egyptian affair, with national champion Salma Shabana meeting her rival Maha Zein. In their many elashes, Zein has more often than not come out the loser, but once again, the spectators were in for a surprise. Shabana gave an astonishingly weak performance, leaving the match wide open for a Zein victory, which she managed, but only hy the skin of her teeth (9-2, 6-9, 3-9, 9-1, 9-3).

"I don't want to make excuses for Salma, but she was under extreme pressure before the competition," said her father, Mustafa Shabana. "The timing was a last-minine decision, and on top of that she has her AUC exams, and the first World

Mixed Cup, at the end of the month." Wagih, Barada, Shabana and Salma have all been selected to represent Egypt in this event in Malaysia at the

After the individual events, it was time for the team competition, "The champions have been defeated. We can't afford any more surprises like that," commented Egypt's temporary coach, Ahmed Safwat. As expected, Egypt and South Africa, seen as the only two strong teams, met in the team final on Tuesday. For once, the match went according to expectations, and ended with an Egyp-

The All Africa Championship was inaugurated this year as part of an International Squash Federation (ISF) drive to promote the sport in Africa.

A general assembly of the ISF last year decided to try and encourage the game in both Asia and Africa through holding regular competitions. The

African federation seemed to be dragging its feet, but following the resignation of federation President Maged Abatha, an extraordinary African general assembly was held on the sidelines of the All Africa Championship to re-elect a new board and a new president. Seventeen countries took part in the assembly, which elected Egypt's Mahmoud Bar-

Barakat is a husinessman and former squash player, who has organised many squash tourna-ments between Egypt and Kenya. He has adopted an active agenda to promote the sport in Africa events already planned for the future include the senior All Africa Squash Championship in '98 in Tanzania, the juniors event in April '98 in Namibia, the Women's Junior Championship in Zimbabwe in April 1997, and finally an African Super Cup, a competition between Africa's best five na-tions, to he held next year in Kenya.

Burdened by the memory of Egypt's three-decade long

golden era of weightlifting, the Egyptian junior men's

team made an impressive comeback while their female

counterparts laid the groundwork for a promising future

Second-round knockout_

African football is on the move this weekend as 48 clubs, including Egypt's Arab Contractors and Zamalek, fight to make it through to the next round in three African competitions. Eric Asomugha reports

Arab Contractors of Egypt, together with other top African football clubs, are facing an early exit from Confederation of their 7-0 first leg victory over MP Tigers, Atrican Football (CAF) con less they can make up for their first-leg defeats in second-leg matches to be held throughout the continent this weekend. Forty-eight elubs, 16 from each competition, will he fighting for places in the fi-nal draws, which will take place in Cairo

In one of the tournaments, the African Cup Winners Cup, Arab Contractors will he on the attack in an attempt to crase the 1-3 away defeat they suffered at the hands of Simba of Tanzania. Contractors, African champions in 1982 and 1983, made it into this round by defeating Ray-on Sport of Rwanda 2-1 on goal ag-gregate. They now need at least a 2-0

home win against Simba to qualify.
Stade d'Abidjan of Côte d'Ivoire will be travelling to Rabat to confront FUS of Morocco after a 1-1 draw in Abidjan. Pretoria City of South Africa, who won their last game 2-1, will be hosted by

for their 0-3 first leg defeat, are hosting Costa do Sol of Mozambique. Meanwhile, Canon of Cameroon gained early qualification after Olympic Beja of Tunisia failed to bonour their first leg

In the Champions Cup, in absence of-Mozambique's Desportivo from the first leg made Zamalek of Egypt the first team to win a place in the final draw. Looking good to join Zamalek are Shooting Stars of Nigeria, which defeated Dynamos of Zimbabwe 5-1 in Ibadan. Meanwhile, ASEC of Côte d'Ivoire, the 1995 fi-nalists, will be guests of Jafaaf de Dakar of Senegal after a surprising 1-1 draw at home. And JS Kabylie, winners of the 1995 African Winners Cup, playing this year in the Champions Cup, are travelling to Burundi after a shocking goalless draw with Fantastique.

Defending champions the Orlando Pi-

Asian Clubs Championships. The Pirates' first leg match in Zambia last Saturday ended in a 1-1 draw. In the CAF Cup, the powerful Mam-

clodi Sundowns of South Africa went down 2-1 to the unknown USST of Reunion at home, a result which has put the Sundowners in a tight spot as they play away this weekend. This poor performance, coming on the heels of a 4-0 defeat in the South African preseason Top Eight Cup may have put coach Clemence Westerhof's job on the line. Among the CAF Cup matches to be played this weekend, Rangers of Nigeria will be at home to Unisport Bafang of Cameroon after a 1-1 away draw. Oran of Algeria, leading 4-1 after the first leg, meet Ferroviaro of Senegal in Dakar, and ESS of Tunisia host SOA of Côte d'Ivoire after the Tunisians' 2-1 defeat.

Uplifting performance

The 22nd Junior World Weightlifting Championships, which ended last Sunday in Poland, witnessed a comeback for Egyot's junior men after an alm year losing streak, reports Eman Abdel-Moeti. It was also the debut competition for the junior women's team. Both teams gave their audience a good performance, an indication that they could stand a good chance against strong countries like Russta, Turkey, and Germany in the 2000 Olympics. If they can keep up the same standard of performance they exhibited last week, competing against 450 lifters from 42 countries, then this team could in future form the vanguard of a new age of Egyptian Olympic weightlifting

The period of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s was a golden age for Egyptian weightlifting, particularly in the featherweight, lightweight, and middleweight categories, with Olympic medals galore coming Egypt's way. But in time, the glitter of the golden age faded, and so did the names of famous weightlifters, like Saleh Soliman and Ibrahim Shams.

champions in those days, as the women's sport was only recognised by the International Weightlifting sgo. The Egyptian Weightlifting Federation formed its first junior women's team two years ago in preparation for Sydney 2000 - the first Olympie Games to inelude the women's event.

The men's junior team comprised Mo-

hamed Sbaban, weighing 54kg, Adel El-Sayed (59kg), Ahmed Samir (64kg), Mohamed Moussa (76kg), Hani Bassionni (83kg) and Ahmed Mustafa (70kg). The highest achiever was Adel El-Sayed, whose 135kg lift in the jerk carned him the bronze medal. "As all the other contenders had high scores in the snatch, I thought I could do better by concentrating on the jerk," he said after the competition. El-Sayed also won fifth place in the snatch, and his combined result put him in sixth place overall. Ahmed Mustafa won fifth place in the snatch, and took overall seventh with a total lift of 282.5kg. Ahmed Samir won fifth place overall, Mohamed

Of course Egypt did not have women Moussa came sixth, Hani Bassouni won ninth place, and Ahmed Shaban came

For the women, too, there were some en-

couraging results, with Sabah Diab, weighing 50kg, taking fifth place, and Amal Hamdi (70kg), coming tenth.

Overall, the lifters performances gave Egypt 168 points, putting it in seventh place among the 42 competing countries. China won the women's competition, while Bulgaria won the men's event, followed by Russia and the Ukraine. A new system was used by which positions were decided by adding up the points scored by each lifter, rather than the number of medals won by each team.

Also in use in the competition was the MAT-95 steroid detection system. This equipment is able to detect steroid use in weightlifters, and m determine the type and quantity of the drug consumed. MAT-1995 was responsible for the dismissal of Belarous' Korolovich and Russia's Petrove from the international weightlifting arena after they tested positive last year.

Goals grades?

Sport and studies don't always mix, and for students who are also involved in sport at international level, life can be especially difficult during exams. Abeer Anwar meets student sportsmen and women trying to juggle their lives



The exam season is well and truly upon us, and while many students may devote every waking hour to their studies, Egypt's international sportsmen and women who are also enrolled in universities have the added stress of dealing with the conflicting demands of revision and a tough schedule of training and competition. Should they give their best to their sport or their studies? Some choose to prioritise one, others try to give their all

As well as playing football for Zamalek and the national team, Khaled El-Ghandour is an undergraduate at the Cooperation Institute (Al-Ta'woum). Like many other sportsmen, be chose to study at the institute because it caters for the special needs of sportsmen. For El-Ghandour it also involved a commitment to football over his previous career path. I was in the Faculty of Law for a year, but I transferred to the Cooperation Institute where 1 would be with other footballers and our situation as national team players would be taken into account, especially during the exam period," he said. Although El-Ghandour is now in the final year, he is not convinced it will be his last. In fact he's been a student at the institute for six years, his graduation delayed because football fixtures have sometimes got in the way of exams.

However, a friendly or even an international match is not necessarily sufficient reason for him to abandon exams. For example, he excused himself from Egypt's match with Algeria in January '95 to take his end of semester exams. "I did not regret this because our team lost the match," he reflected. But when it comes to events like the Olympics or the World Cup, El-Ghandour's priorities are clear: be wants to be on the field.

Even when no major championship is in progress, he does not lead the life of an average student; he

Edited by Inas Mazhar

often goes to training camps accompanied by both books and tutors. He fits in an intensive two-week block of study before exams. "I know this seems a short time to prepare," he commented, "but I have benefited a lot from the new two-semester system." This system allows him to take courses lasting only one semester, on which he is examined only once. He is rather relieved that he will not have to make a choice when it comes to this year's exams - Zamalek's match with Mozambique in the African Championship, due to take place in May, was cancelled after Mozambique withdrew.

Despite El-Ghandour's torn loyalties, he seems like a model student in comparison with Ahli's Reda Abdel-Aa'l, also a national team player. Abdel-Aa'l has been a student at the Cooperation Institute since 1987. For him there is no question football comes first, and he will postpone exams for any match, even a friendly. And so, despite his nine-year university career, Abdel-Aa'l is still only in the third year. "Between 1987 and 1991, I excused myself from exams to play in international and league championships," he explained. And, while injuries are normally considered bad luck for footballers, he described how an injury got him through the first year exams. "I had to stay in bed for four months which gave me time to study," he said. He made it the following year too, because he was out of the national team.

Abdel Aa'l is cheerily optimistic about his prospects for this year. He managed to pass the first term exams because league matches were in the aftemoon, giving him the chance to sit the exams in the morning and go directly to the match af-terwards. For the end of year exams too, it all rests on the timing. "I just hope the league matches will be at noon to give me the chance to take the ex-

But what about players who study outside the sports-oriented Cooperation Institute? Zamalek's

Hazem Imam, one of the youngest players in the na-tional team and a second year student at the Faculty of Commerce, sees the sport-study issue rather differently from his national teammate. "I think that education is more important than football," he argued, "because at some point I will have to retire and rely on a career in commerce."

This is not to say he is prepared to abandon a promising career on the football field. His efforts to combine sport with education led to him having to repeat the first year at the faculty, but then he found his key to success — he pulls out of matches if he has an exam. "I think that there are many players that could replace Hazem on the field, but there is only one Hazem who can sit the exams," he ex-

During this year's first term exams, Imam was in closed camp in preparation for the African Cham-pionship in Johannesburg. He took one day off, with the permission of coach Rund Kroll and studied at home. He then sat his exams, rushing straight back to training after each one. "But I think that this time I will be able to sit for the exams because the league matches can be played without me," he said.

Sportsmen and women in other fields can find it even more difficult to strike a balance. According to judo champion Heba Rashid, it is particularly hard for athletes involved in individual, rather than team, sports. "It's very hard to miss a match because often it's a case of gaining qualification for the next round of a tournament," she explained. "This is something footballers don't have to contend with."

Rashid, African, Arab and Egyptian judo champion in the open weight and ranked third in the last World Championship, has had to make some sacrifices in her education to fulfill herself in her sport. She enrolled at the Open University rather than Cairo University to allow a more flexible schedule for training and competing, but has nevertheless found herself stuck in the second year for three years.

"My younger sister started university after me and finished before me," she admitted. She was, she said, able to pass the first year easily because she was an unknown at the time, but after that her judo career took off and she felt unable to miss training camps and competitions. She will miss the exams this year too because she is participating in Atlanta

In her view, the luckjest athletes are those with the opportunity and resources to study in the US, like swimmer Rania Elwani or tennis player Tamer

Meanwhile, squash player Omar El-Borolousy, ranked 53 in the world, has yet another experience of combining education and sport. A second year AUC student, be has managed to pass all his exams so far, while still maintaining a full training and competing schedule. He attributes his success to the flexibility of the system at AUC, and the attitude of his professors. "The semester system has made it easier for me, because if I miss a semester I can always make it up later," he said. "And my professors are always ready to help because they believe in me

as a squash player." His teachers are generally willing to postpone exams, or allow him to take them early, if there is a clash between exam dates and championship fixtures. And El-Borolousy is keen to pass. Like footballer Khaled El-Ghandour he puts in two weeks of study before an exam. He also goes without sleep for two nights before the exam to allow extra studying time. "I challenge myself because I want to be a successful engineer before being a good squash player." he said.

This year, El-Borolousy will be able to sit his exams because be will be playing in the Al-Ahram International Championship at the Giza Pyramids. He knows it will be a tough schedule, but he is determined, he says, to "double my effort" and suc-

Olympics countdown

US tops basketball

THE UNITED States won its fifth consecutive game in a pre-Olympie women's basketball tournament, defeating Cuba 108-

In another match, Australia improved its record to 3-2 with a 91-62 win over Ukraine. The tournament is being used as a leadup to the Olympics basketball competition, which starts on 21 July in Atlanta.

Touretsky unsuspended

SUSPENDED Russian swimming eoach Gennadi Touretsky has been granted late accreditation to the Atlanta Olympics after in-tervention by the Australian Olympic Com-

The Australian Swimming Coaches' Association (ASCA) last year banned Touretsky, coach of 100m world record-holder Alexander Popov, and now working at Australia's Sports Institute in Canherra, from involvement with Australian teams for four

The sanctinn was placed on Touretsky after he was fined and spent 30 days in jail in Hawaii after being convicted of assaulting a fellow passenger on a trans-Pacific airliner.

Top runner down

QU YUNXIA, the world record holder in the women's 1,500 metres, finished a distant eighth in the event in China's Olympic trials, casting doubt on whether she would qualify for the Atlanta Olympics.

Qu, 25, controversial coach Ma Junren's tnp runner, finished the race in Nanjing in 4 minutes, 13.05 seconds. Wang Chunyan won

Flame pops out

AFTER a brief snuff-out, the Olympic flame is back on track. The flame is slowly making its way to Atlanta, arriving by ferry on Tuesday after going out while crossing the Ta-coms Narrows Bridge.

The torchbearer, cyclist Harley Sheffield. was on the hridge when a tire blew. The torch popped out of its holder, fell onto the hridge and hroke into pieces, extinguishing the flame. A replacement torch has been lit.

Taher Abu Zeid:

Facing the nation

Um Kulthoum's voice, and the day Cairo burned

Neat facial features — ageless, as though the strains of time had somehow bypassed them trim dapper figure, thin grey hair — all suggest an offscreen Charlie Chaplin.

"Yes indeed, says Taher Abu Zeid, "I am unabashedly romantic, have been since my very early

Taher Abu Zeid, lawyer, politician, and broad-caster, was born in Taikha in 1922. He went to primary school in Mansoura, across the Nile.

There was no bridge at the time, so we crossed by boat twice daily. This was the most exciting aspect of school. I just love the water, and anything to do with water."

Taber's family was middle-class, his father the much respected religious registrar (ma'zoun

"I am very surprised when I see caricatures of the ma'zoun ridiculed in cinema and on the stage. This was a very prestigious position in the community; his opinions and views were sought and respected." But Taher remembers his mother most vividly. "Imagine a home with no refrigerator, freezer, cooker, TV, video, not even electric lights... But she was always cheerful, bustling in and out of the house, bringing in water from the barrel outside, cooking, washing gossiping. She was totally illiterate, but what wisdom she possessed."

Taher Abu Zeid'a childhood was peopled by

characters which seem folkloric to a modern city dweller: Amm Mahfouz, the water carrier, for whom social restrictions were suspended: he was allowed free access to any house in the village, even when the head of the household was not around; Amm Ahmed Diab, the local medico, who had became a walking pharmacopocia as a result of years of experience running the local pharmaceutical storehouse. Today many women refuse to see male doctors, but everyone trusted Amm Ahmed. "It was, as one says, another time and another place," sighs Taher.

It was a happy household until tragedy struck, His elder brother, Said, a teacher who showed great promise, contracted tuberculosis and died at the age of 23.

"What was even more tragic", says Taher, "is that Said was in love with the daughter of the wealthiest family in Talkha. She was also in love with him, but class difference did not sanction such a marriage. Said died young and heartbroken."

His brother's death marked the beginning of a

sadness which has never left Abu Zeid. The writings of Mustafa El-Manfalouti developed his romantic bent. El-Manfalouti had published a series of romantic novels, adapted from the French, which were popular and widely read.

Abu Zeid's ambition was to become a lawyer and, after finishing high school, he took a job as a bailiff, learning the ropes of the legal system and acquiring a certain standing in Dikimiss, the small town where he had been appointed: "There I was, just over 18 and treated with great deference by the people, even being addressed as Taher Bey."

One day he was supposed to repossess a sewing machine because the owner had defaulted on payments. "I went along with the company representative to carry out the court order, and the scene was something I will never forget. There was this widow with her three daughters, wailing and weeping as though they had lost their closest relative." Abu Zeid paid the instalment, of course, and had only two pounds left to see him through the rest of the

As a bailiff, he was able to study law as a part-time student, until this was forbidden by the Ministry of Justice. This did not deter Taher and he went off to meet the formidable under-secretary, Abdel-Razeq El-Sanhouri, one of Egypt's greatest le-

gal minds. Impressed with the young man's tenacity, Sanhouri gave in, and Abu Zeid eventually completed his law degree and went into practice in Alex-

There, a friend, who happened to be the engineer at the local radio station, invited him to attend a voice test for potential radio amouncers. "It will be fun to see them stutter and stumble." said the friend.

Abu Zeid went along, and the friend suggested that, since he was there, he might as well take the test. To his utter amazement he passed. "At the time I did not

even own a radio set," he says incredulously. This brought down the curtains on his legal career and began a long and successful association with the media.

It was the time of the great radio pioneers Mo-hamed Fathi, Ali El-Rai', Abdel-Hamid Younes, Tomader Tawfiq, Hosni El-Hadidi... today's Radio Taher recalls how impressed be was with the fit-

ted carpets and the air conditioned studio. "It was a far cry from my small bailiff's office in Di-Rapid rise in the professional hierarchy was possible for the talented. "We were really jacks of all

trades: announcers, newscasters, programme pre-senters, even actors in radio dramas," he re-His first outside broadcast — OB in the jargon - was in November 1951. It was a political occasion, and Taher's legal oratorical training stood

him in good stead. The OB was a success. Soon afterwards he was asked by the late great Abdel-Wahab Youssef to join him in an OB of an Umm Kulthoum concert. "Sitting in the radio booth at the theatre, not only hearing, but also see-ing the great lady was like a far off dream come true. I remembered my days in Dikirniss, no radio set of my own, having to sit in the coffee house to hear her sing." His voice almost cracks with emo-tion, and it is clear that this was a quantum leap in Abu Zeid's life.

His career was just beginning. One very popular programme was "A Tour with the Microphone", which involved going out into the streets with a popular film or stage star and just talking to people. Garrab Hazzak ("Try Your Luck") was another of the most popular radio shows at the time. People from all walks of life came into the theatre to participate in the quiz. It was during one of the recording sessions that he met his future wife, Camelia El-Shanawani, today head of women's programmes on TV. Abu Zeid, ironically, had tried his luck — and won.

Folklore and folk art was very much a part of Taher's early upbringing. Memories of Amm Ahmed and Amm Mahfouz perhaps made it inevitable that he go one to produce and present a folklore programme "which was instrumental in bringing the topic to the notice of radio audiences, and raising awareness of our heritage." It was also this type of programme that introduced such future stars as Sayed Mekkawi, Fayza Ahmed, Abdel-Rahman El-

Abnoudi, and Salah Jahin. Many turning points in Egypt's history are vividly engraved on Taher's mind, and one feels that he was never able to make the break between emotions and professionalism so characteristic of today's stony-faced, monotonous announcers. The day Cairo hurned, 26 January 1952, all chaos broke loose. Taher was in the studio just before the end of transmission. "I was so incensed at the events of the day that, rather than close with the next day's programme preview, I played a nationalistic song by Umm Kulthoum. This of course was risking my career, as you could not unilaterally introduce pro-

Again, in 1956, Abu Zeid "was supposed to go and report the withdrawal of the British and French troops from Port Said. There was a problem at the British checkpoint, and we were not allowed to proceed further." This did not deter Abu Zeid, how-

"On the Egyptian side of the checkpoint," he re-members with a twinkle of the eyes, "there was an ambulance with a driver and paramedic. I was there with Saad Labib. We looked at each other, we looked at the ambulance attendants, they looked at us. No words were exchanged. Just like a movie... The next scene saw Saad and I driving the ambulance through the British checkpoint." They got

their story — just like the movies.
"The 1956 war," remembers Abu Zeid, "was one of the brief, isolated, shining moments of Arab solidarity. Our transmitters were bombed, and we went off air. Within minutes you could hear the call sign: 'Hona Al-Qahira' (This is Cairo) from Damascus, Baghdad, Amman, Algiers, Riyad... every Arab sta-

tion took up the call sign."

With such strong political convictions, it was only a step to political activity — a step he took in 1958, when he ran in the National Assembly elections. Here his mother played a pivotal role. "I was up against an army officer, incidentally also a friend. I felt the odds were not in my favour. It was my mother who called her friends and neighbours, who in turn called their friends, and before we realised it, some 2,000 women were out voting for me." Taher won, and represented Talkha until the Assembly was abolished in 1960. He had to leave the radio. as members of the Assembly were not allowed to bold jobs at the time.

Taber returned to radio and TV, this time as a freelancer. "Face the Nation" was a raging success. causing great embarrassment and discomfort in official circles. The programme was described by the foreign media as a lone light of democracy in the night of totalitarianism. It was stopped after the 1967 debacle, as public opinion was too enraged and frustrated and would not have tolerated officials glibly trying to explain away the un-

In 1971, Abu Zeid was one of those ousted during Sadar's palace coup, only to be reinstated three hours later — a result of crossed wires somewhere in the system. But he never went back to radio.

He went for a stint as director of the Arabic service of Radio Moute Carlo, returning two years later, and was asked by the then minister of in-formation, Kamal Abul-Magd, to reintroduce "Face the Natioo" on TV. This he did, until it was finally put to rest following the bread riots of January 1977.

Today Taher Abu Zeid spends his time on his farm in Nubariya, or with Omar, his grandson.

"People used to seek each other out for the sake of friendship and neigham afraid that today's materialism is eroding this feeling."

and laugh even more seldom. Abu Zeid is well placed to notice the differences between then and now, and it saddens him that people just seem to care less and less.

"But this is less so in rural areas," he quickly notes. "Whenever there is a catastrophe, everybody rushes in to the rescue."

After the 1973 War, he believes, these positive traits came once more to the fore. "During our youth; there were battles to be fought. And we fought them. The struggle for independence, guer-rilla warfare in the Suez Canal zone, the Ismailiya police station incident of 1952 that led to the burning of Carro..."

All these issues were vividly and vociferously expressed in the liberal climate of the time. The peo-

ple were involved. He adds, "Had the revolution taken place on 26 January 1952, it would really have been a people's revolution. Instead it was an army coup. True, it had great popular support, but it chose the path of one-man rule, culminating in the 1967 War. I cannot say the army was defeated, that is not fair — defeat was a result of a decayed system, not hattlefield prowess."

But Abu Zeid wouldn't like to close on a sour

"We Egyptians have a unique capacity for expression, a talent for formulating philosophies that truly capture our spirit of optimism and general cheerfulness... This can be seen in some street names... The one I have in mind is called: 'Light of Darkness

Profile by Mohamed Islam

Pack of Cards

I can think of nothing better to do on Saturday at 7pm than to go to the Hanager Arts Centre and watch the brilliant documentary film by my good friend, director Yousri Nasrallah, On Boys, Girls and the Veil. But excited as I am, this won't be the first time I see the film. Yes dears, I was there when it received the Egyptian Film Critics' best video downentary award at the last Ismailia Film Festival, and at the Locarno Film Festival, where it was recognised as the best video entry. This great film about relationships dominated by social obligation was also screened on French and German TV, and recently in New York at the San Errorice Film Festival. the San Francisco Film Festival.

♦ And as I come to the end of the novel I'm currently reading, the most perfectly timed of all book fairs begins tomorrow. Held by the Al-Ahram distribution agency in cooperation with AUC, in AUC's Oriental Hall, the book fair will be opened at 5pm, and books in both Arabic and English will he on sale for three days.

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